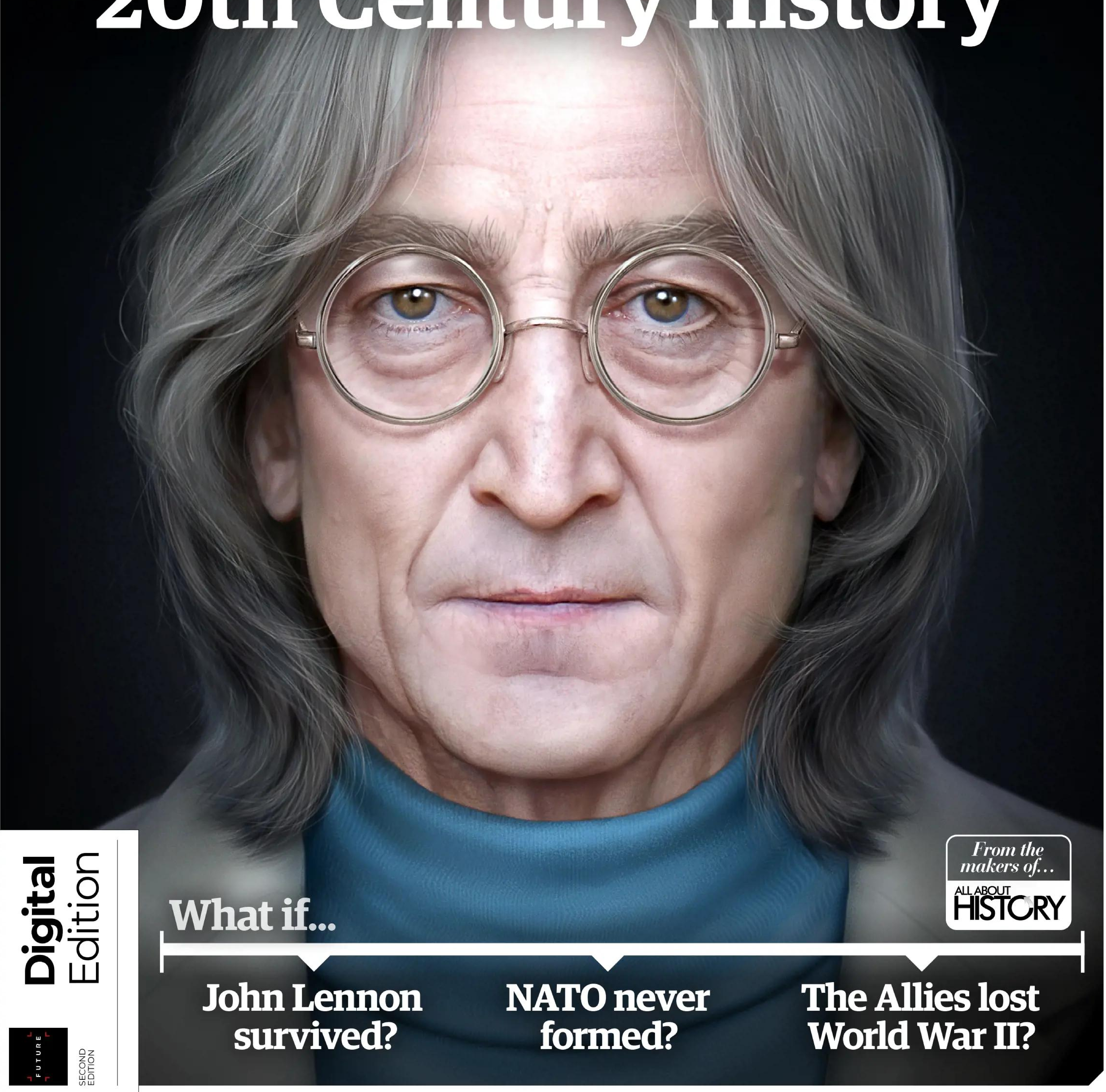
NEW

What if...

Book of Alternative

20th Century History



What if...

John Lennon survived?

NATO never formed?

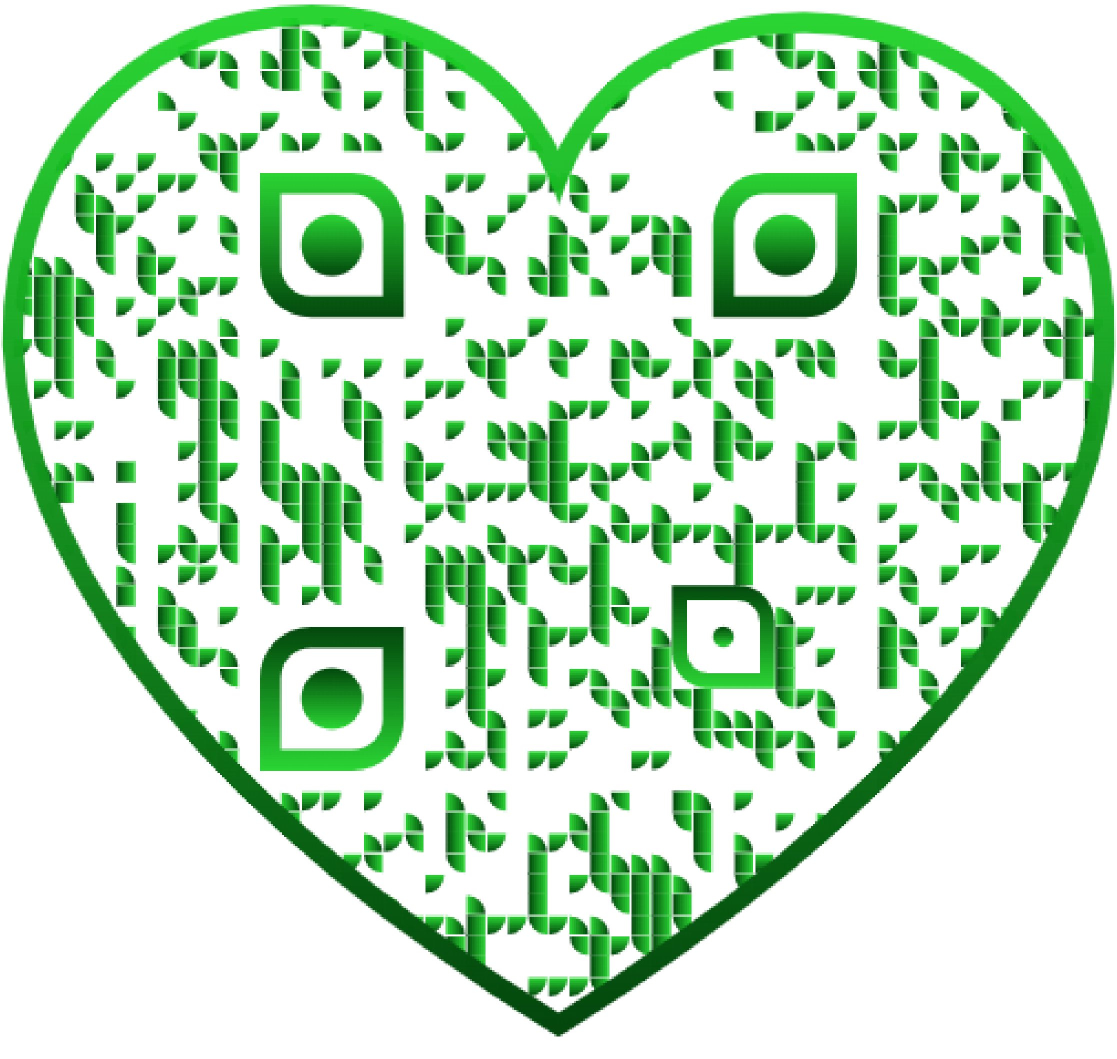
The Allies lost World War II?

From the makers of...
ALL ABOUT HISTORY

Digital Edition

FUTURE

SECOND EDITION



Welcome to

What if...

Book of Alternative

20th Century History

The stories we encounter as we explore history are captivating. However, one irresistible question we are often left with is, "What if it happened differently?" In this new volume of *What if... Book of Alternative History*, experts examine defining moments throughout the 20th Century and paint a picture of how things could have gone. We will ask, "What if John F Kennedy had survived?" We will explore an alternate reality where Russia stepped onto the moon first. We'll explore if The Beatles would have reformed with an alive-and-well John Lennon. All this and more can be found when you turn the page.

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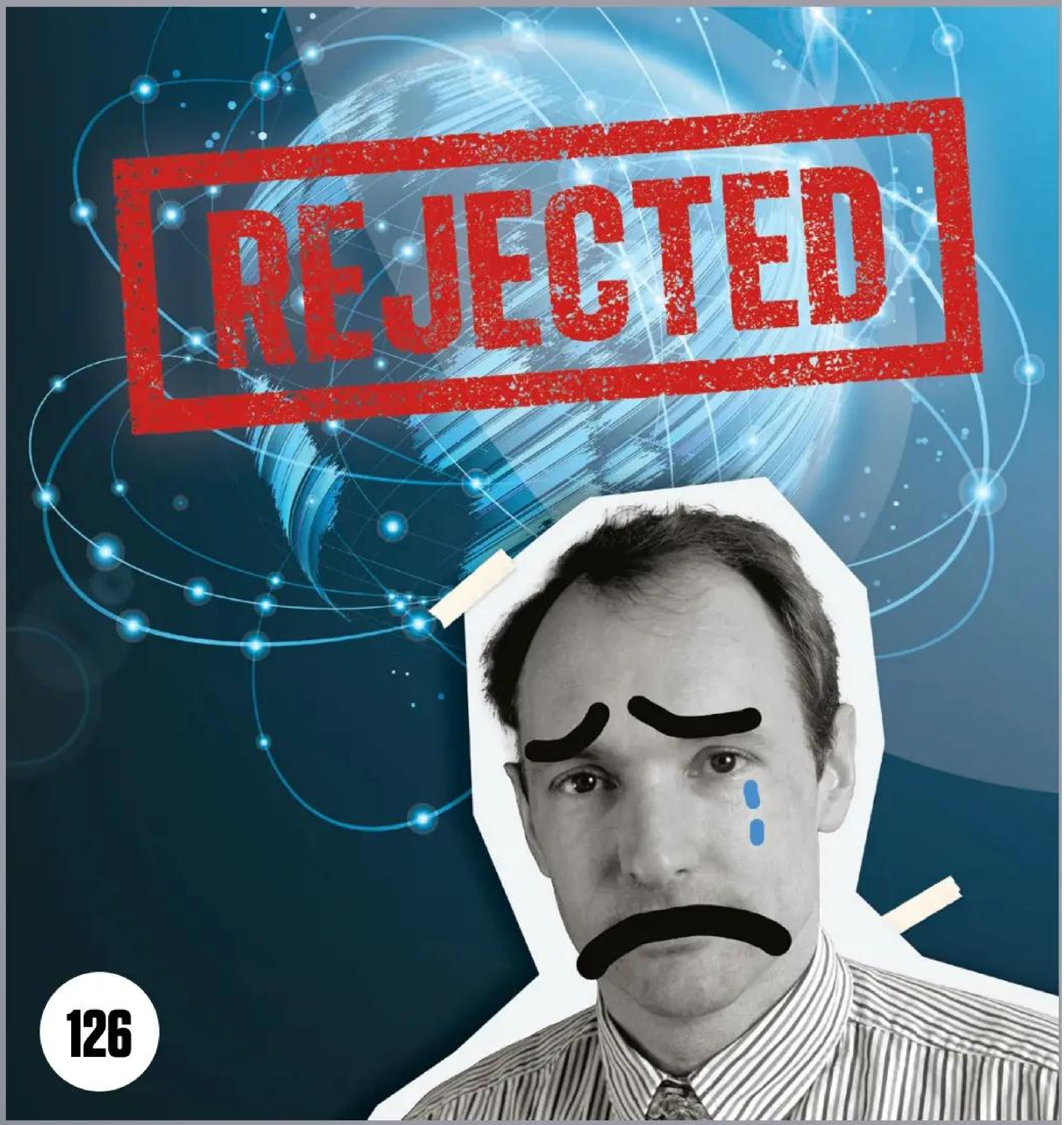

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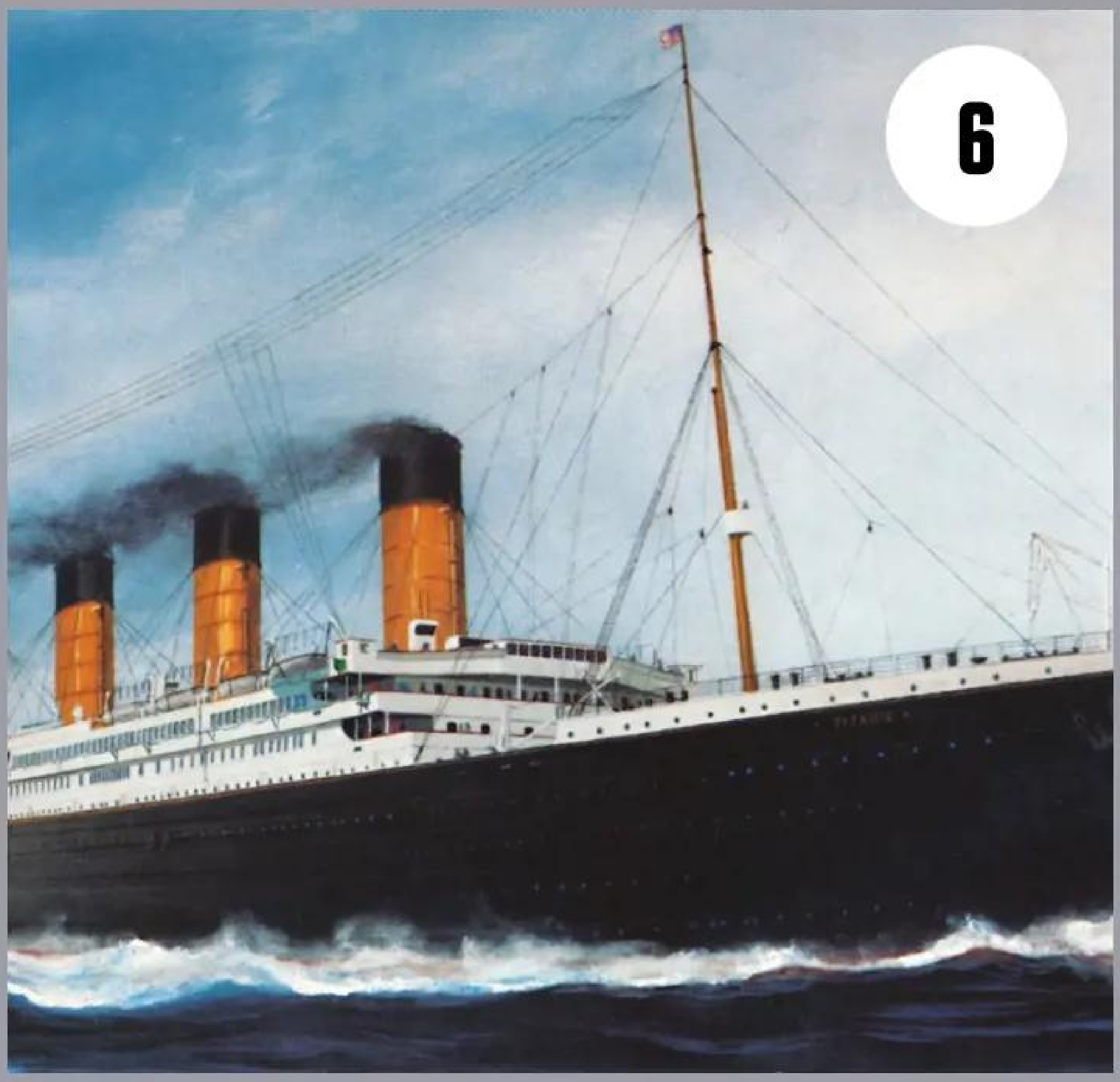
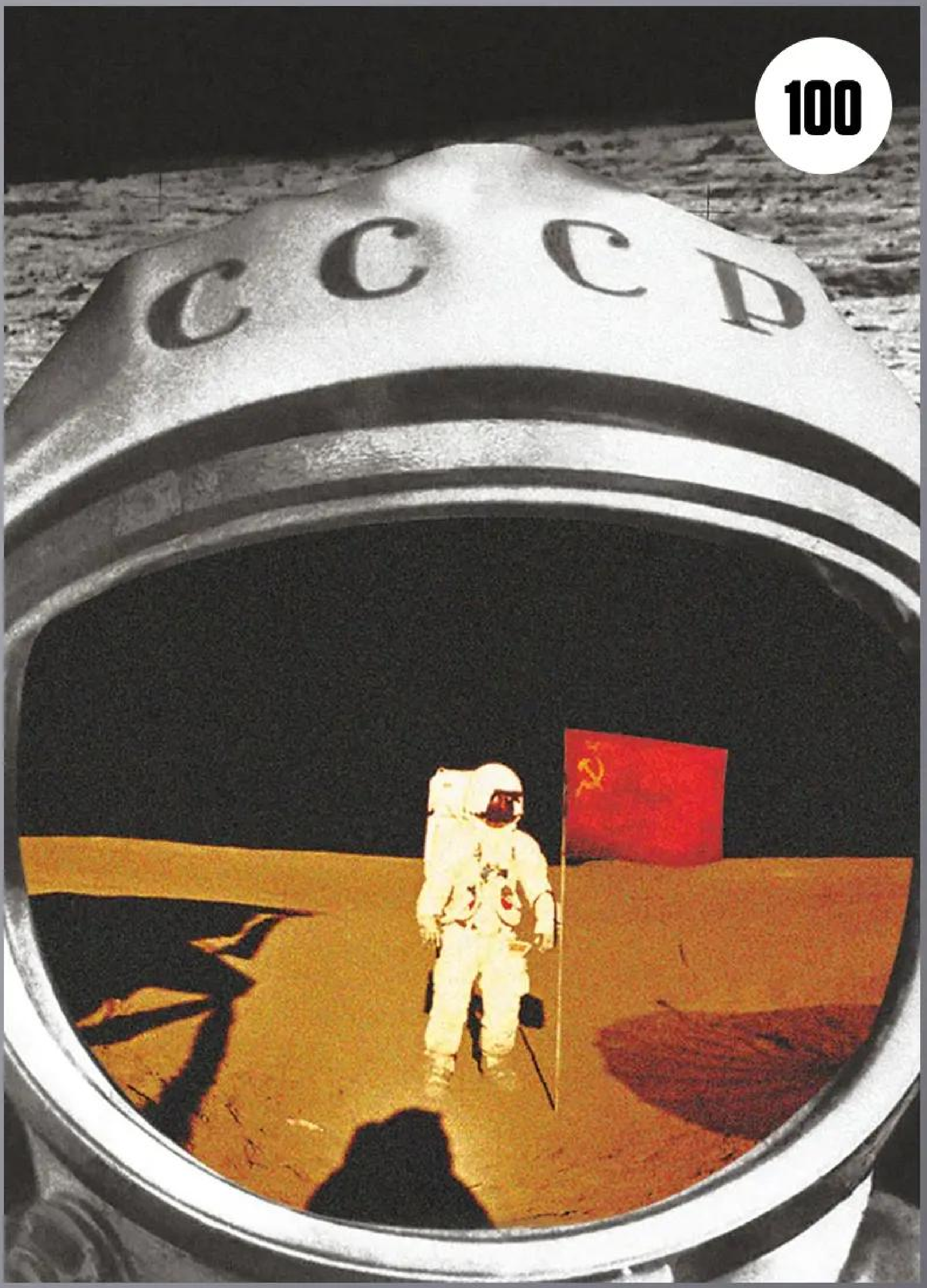
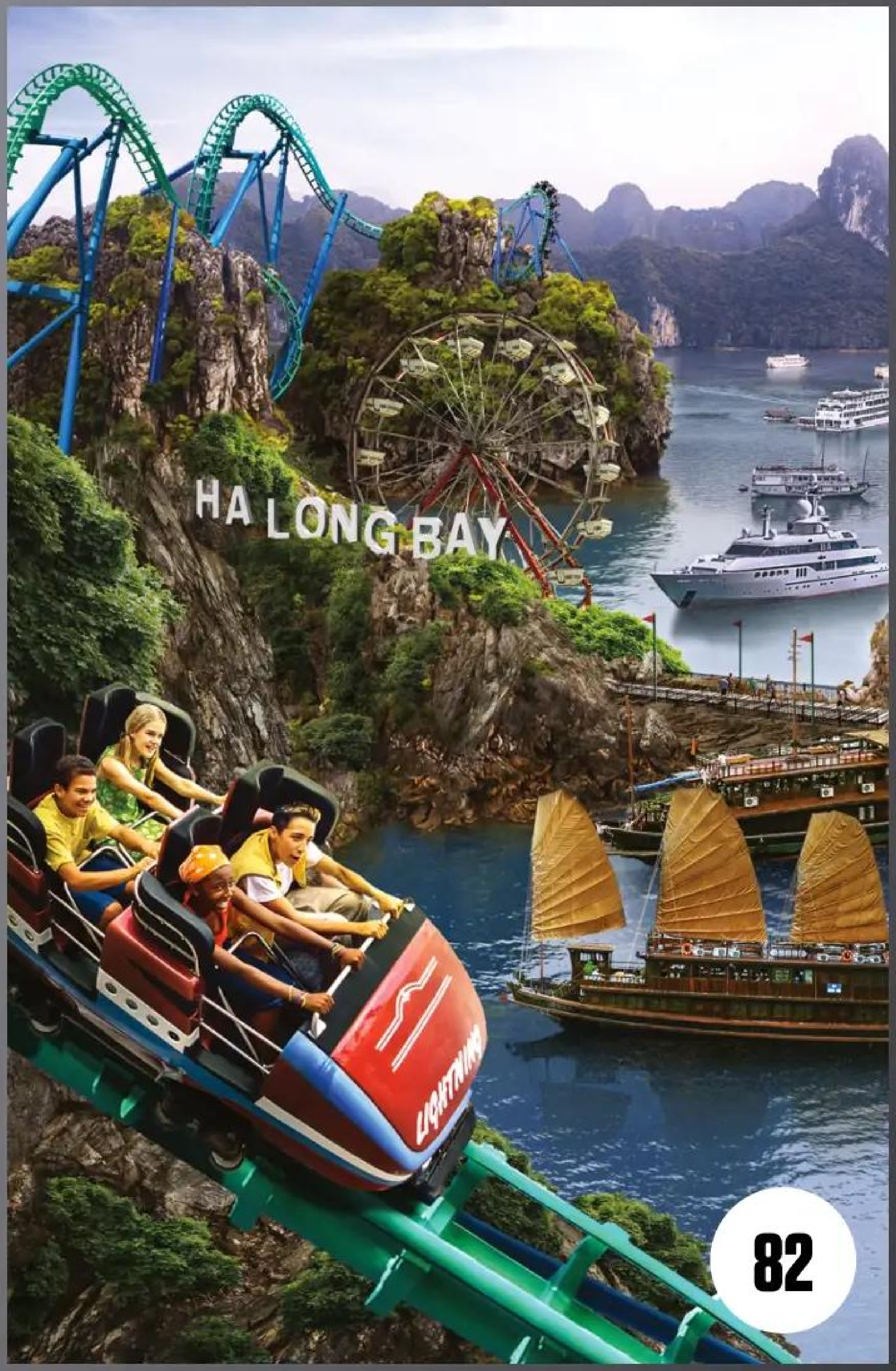






What if...

THE TITANIC HAD NOT SUNK?

She was the largest, most luxurious and supposedly safest ship afloat, but her loss was to change the course of history

INTERVIEW WITH

© Dr Aidan McMichael

Dr Aidan McMichael

Aidan is based in Belfast and is chairman of the Belfast Titanic Society, and co-edits its magazine. He is also chair of a monthly society talk programme to an international Titanic audience.

Even before a single rivet had been hammered into place, RMS Titanic was destined for fame. Her owners, the White Star Line, ignored competitor Cunard's boasts of speed; instead, they focused on opulence and luxury to carry passengers from all walks of life across the Atlantic towards the American Dream. Titanic was the largest moving man-made object in the world, and public interest and expectations matched her colossal size. White Star staked its reputation on the ship – all Titanic had to do now was deliver on that promise.

What different events, circumstances or decisions prior to and during the voyage may have avoided disaster?

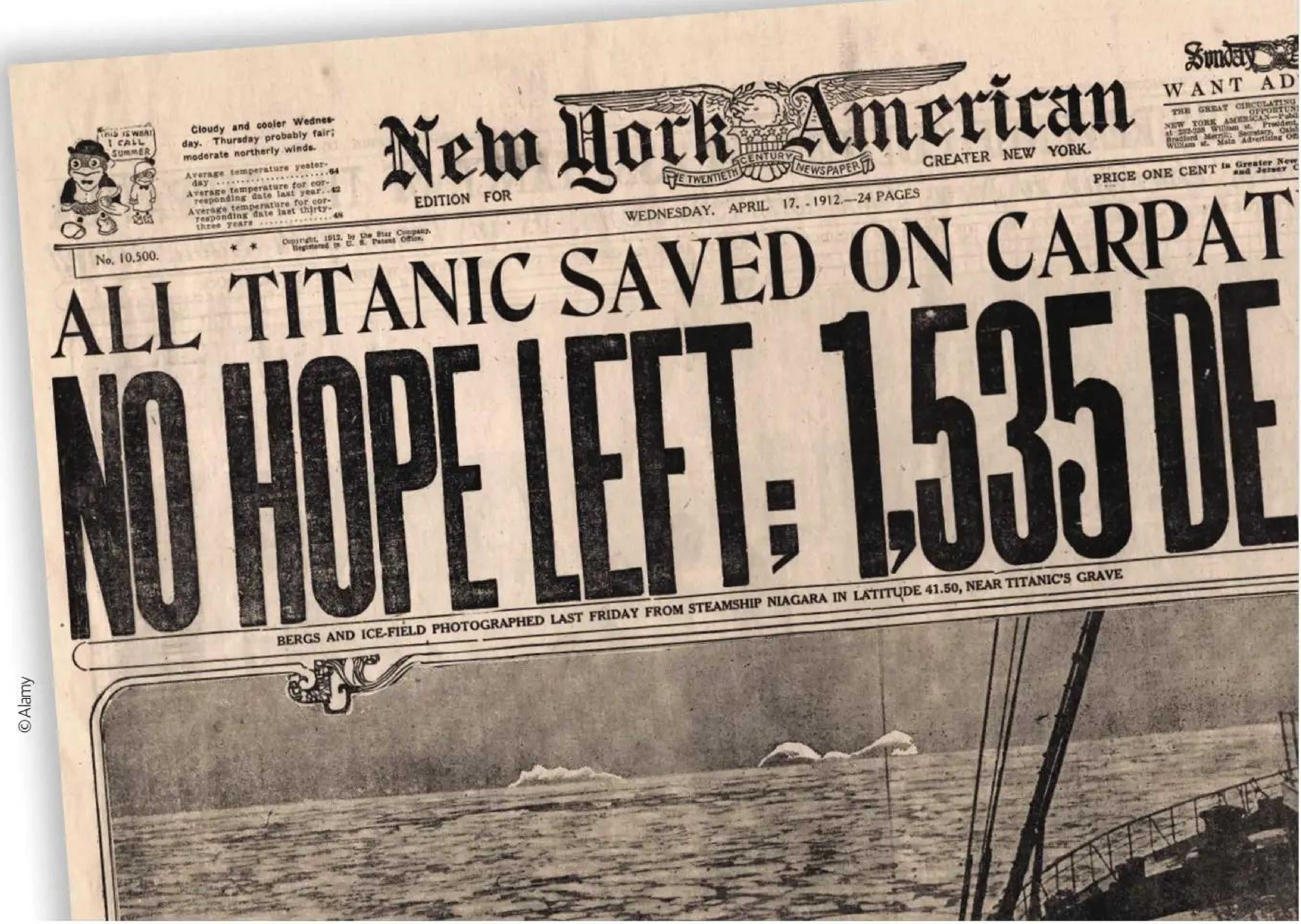
It is possible to see events around the Titanic as a gathering perfect storm. No one single thing may have been enough to either cause or avoid disaster, but with each event, the pendulum swung further against Titanic, and the odds of survival became stacked against her.

It is, in many ways, a whole series of 'what ifs'. If Titanic's sister ship, Olympic, had not ludicrously collided with HMS Hawke in 1911 and needed repairing, taking workers away from the Titanic and delaying her completion, would she have sailed sooner and avoided her fate? If the fire that raged in one of her coal bunkers from the very start of the voyage had been put out sooner, would there have been minimum damage to the bulkhead, leaving it more secure? If Captain Edward Smith had been more cautious after his collision on the Olympic with the navy ship instead of overly confident in the potential 'unsinkability' of the ships, would he have acted differently when captain of the Titanic? Would he have been more reserved with the speed of the vessel and its ability to react to danger? And then there are things which were always beyond the control of the captain and the White Star Line. The unusual weather in the Arctic in 1911 would lead to a larger volume of sea ice and, in particular, icebergs, protected for greater distances in a flow of cold Arctic water that pushed down towards the Gulf Stream. Not only were there more of them, but they were potentially bigger and more deadly to ships of all sizes, even the largest in the world. And what if, instead of handling countless personal messages for passengers, the operators in the radio room had heeded the warnings from other vessels in the area of the threat of sea ice and relayed this to the captain? Perhaps, despite the loss of face and reputation such a delay [from slowing down] would've caused, disaster could have been averted.

How important would Titanic have been to the growth of competitive trans-Atlantic travel?

Titanic, if she had survived, would have made the White Star Line a robust challenger to its rival Cunard and other shipping lines servicing the lucrative and busy North Atlantic run. Like all market competitors, making money would have meant selling highly profitable rooms in Titanic's first-class decks and ensuring they could max out on her third-class capacity. Competition, then as now, was regarded as healthy, driving innovation in technology and service improvement for passengers. From what we hear of her maiden voyage and survivor accounts

Main image source: © Getty Images



THIS IS WHAT I CALL SUMMER

Cloudy and cooler Wednesday. Thursday probably fair; moderate northerly winds.

Average temperature yesterday 64
Average temperature for corresponding date last year..42
Average temperature for corresponding date last thirty-three years 48

New York American

THE TWENTIETH CENTURY NEWSPAPER

GREATER NEW YORK.

EDITION FOR

PRICE ONE CENT

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No. 10,500. * * WEDNESDAY, APRIL 17, 1912.—24 PAGES

ALL TITANIC SAVED ON CARPAT

NO HOPE LEFT; 1,535 DE

BERGS AND ICE-FIELD PHOTOGRAPHED LAST FRIDAY FROM STEAMSHIP NIAGARA IN LATITUDE 41.50, NEAR TITANIC'S GRAVE

© Alamy

RIGHT
News of the huge loss of life spread around the globe

TITANIC
LIVERPOOL
READ BY A MILLION
HIA
AD
TITANIC

THE PAST

1911

TIME FOR LUXURY

Having opted out of the speed race for crossing the Atlantic, White Star Line concentrated on luxury and the comfort of its passengers. The Olympic and Titanic were fitted to the highest standards, and not just for the wealthy. It was noted by third-class passengers that the facilities and finish below decks were far from basic and much more comfortable than many of White Star's competitors. Such an investment by White Star was not a coincidence: the rush to find new opportunities in the New World made third class a very profitable enterprise for the company.

1911

LATE TO THE PARTY

It is ironic that the captain of the Titanic, Edward Smith, was responsible for causing the delay of the ship's completion while he was captain of Titanic's sister vessel Olympic. Having collided with a navy warship following a botched manoeuvre by Smith, Olympic's repairs diverted workers away from Titanic's construction and delayed the completion and launch of the vessel. Such a change in plan placed the much-advertised maiden voyage of the world's largest ocean liner – and White Star's reputation – in jeopardy. It also dramatically changed the timings of her voyage, putting her in the wrong place at the wrong time.

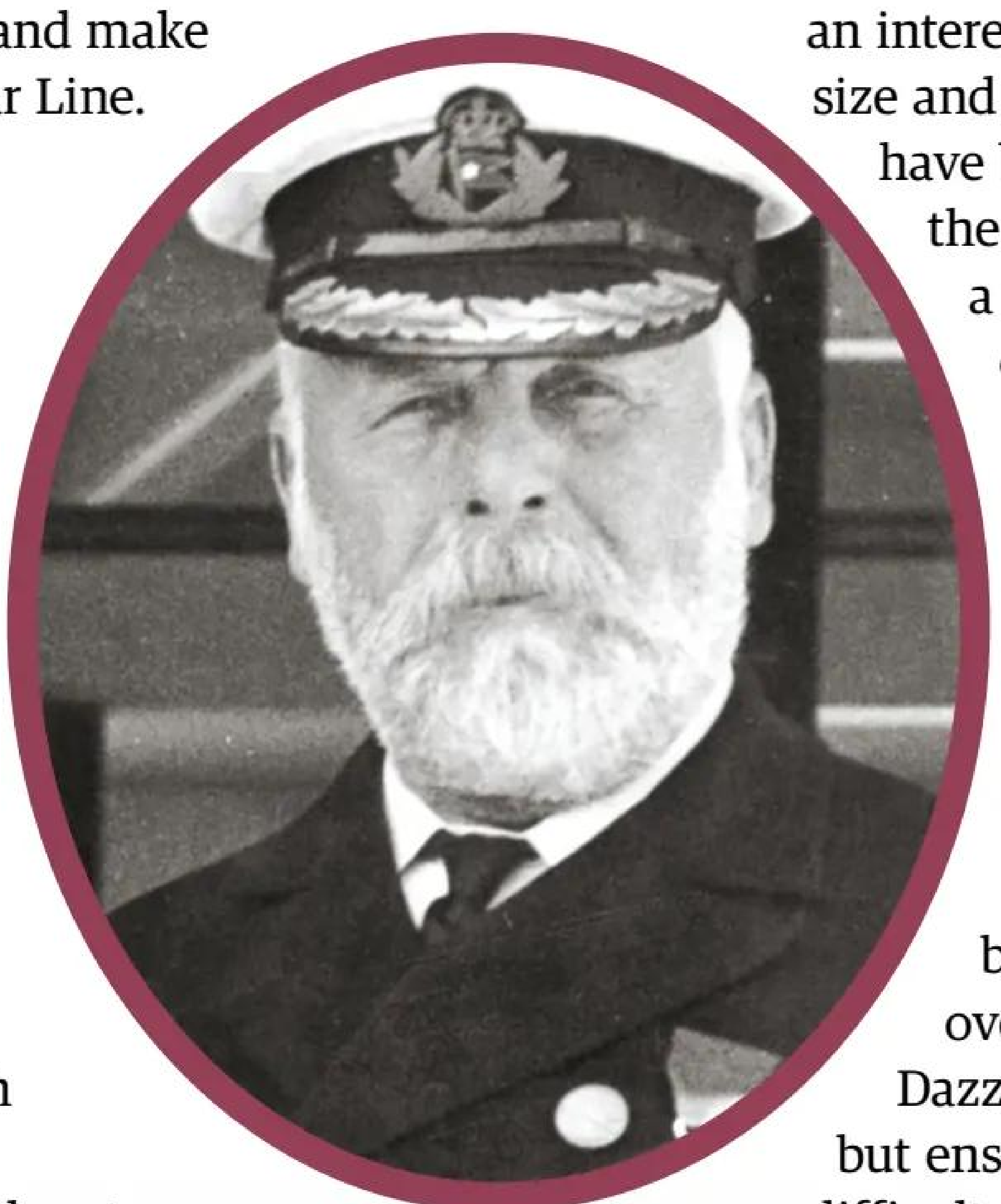
1912

STAY OFF THE AIR

By 1912, the modern innovation of wireless was being used on trans-Atlantic crossings, and Titanic was no exception. The novelty for passengers was to send messages to friends and loved ones ashore. The operators, who were paid by the wireless manufacturer Marconi, were overwhelmed. The closest vessel to Titanic, the SS Californian, messaged a warning of sea ice, only to be told to get off the air so more lucrative private messages could be sent. Following Titanic's radio distress signal, picked up by the Carpathia at 1:45am on 15 April, the last message from Titanic was: "Come as quickly as possible, old man, the engine room is filling up to the boilers."

of the days before the disaster, Titanic had surpassed first-class passenger expectations, so she was, indeed, set to build a great service reputation and make money for her owners White Star Line.

How influential could she have been in promoting developments in ship design?
The Olympic was the actual flagship of the Olympic class. Titanic, her new sister, completed around a year later, was almost identical, so her design features had already been showcased and marketed. This included the system of watertight compartments – 16 in all – which ran the length of the ship and were designed to minimise the threat of sinking, even if the hull had been breached and the vessel took on water. Each compartment had a watertight door which could be closed manually, electronically from the bridge, or by a float switch should all else fail. Titanic was designed to take on water in up to four of these compartments without sinking. There was also one key feature that was different on Titanic compared with Olympic. Passengers on the North Atlantic crossing reported that they were cold while out strolling on their private deck. Harland & Wolff, the shipbuilder, listened to that feedback and introduced a partially enclosed deck – a good example of meeting your customers' expectations! No doubt this innovation and her luxurious interiors, had she survived, would have been copied and imitated by other competitor shipping lines.

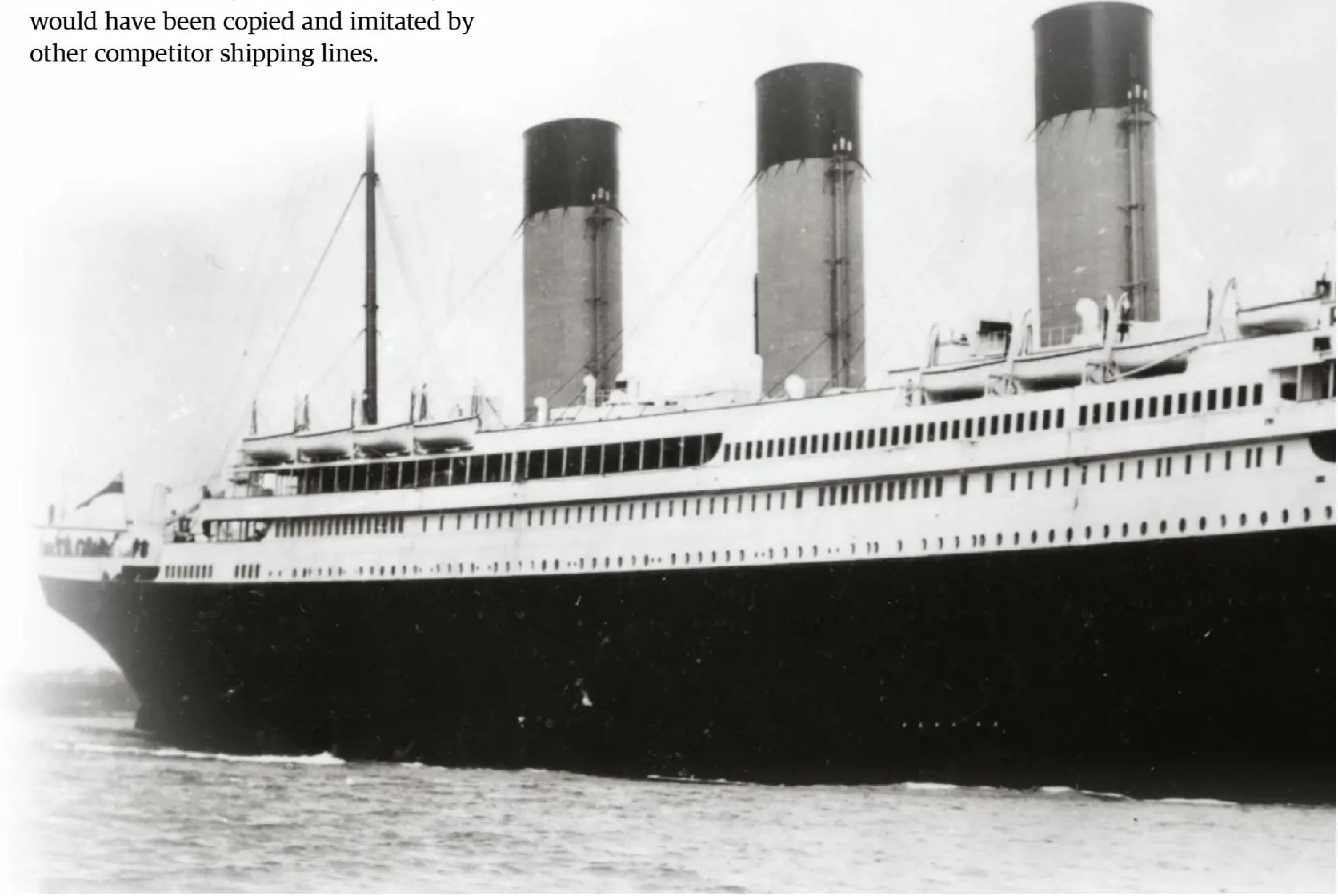


Captain Edward Smith perished aboard his ship

What kind of First World War experience would she have had?
Undoubtedly, Titanic would have had an interesting World War I due to her size and passenger capacity. She would have been a valuable resource for the British Admiralty, possibly as a troop carrier, a hospital ship or a cargo carrier; and perhaps her pre-war reputation would have made her a prime target and propaganda trophy to any German U-boat. To operate safely, she would have been camouflaged – a popular World War I camouflage was 'dazzle' – stripes in various shades of black, white and grey painted over decks, funnels and sides.

Dazzle did not directly conceal a ship but ensured the enemy would find it difficult to estimate range, speed and heading. Each ship's dazzle patterns were unique to avoid making classes of ships instantly recognisable to the enemy. What would seafarers have made of seeing Titanic in dazzle camo?

What do you think would have been her final fate and why?
Like Titanic's sister ship, Olympic, and like all great liners of their day, she would most likely have been sent to the breakers yard as scrap. The great Atlantic liners were always updated and replaced as technology advanced – later, for example, there was a move away from coal burning to new diesel technology with cleaner and more efficient engines requiring fewer crew and therefore saving money.



Olympic was scrapped in 1929 and we can take a guess Titanic would have been scrapped a year later in 1930 had she survived. One wonders, therefore, with the materials saved from the scrapping of Titanic, would there be hotels and bars with wood panelling from Titanic's opulent smoking room?

What changes in maritime safety happened because of the disaster? Changes that may have been hindered or never happened if Titanic hadn't sunk?

There are a number of key technology and safety features that may not have happened as early as 1912, including lifeboat numbers and wider use of radio at sea. The founding of the International Ice Patrol in the North Atlantic was most likely brought forward by the Titanic disaster. The scale of the disaster created sufficient public support on both sides of the Atlantic to prompt a working-together approach which led to the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS) convention in 1914. This led to the founding of the ice patrol run by the US Coastguard, which continues to provide information and iceberg warnings for shipping. Countless lives lost through iceberg incidents have been avoided all because of the Titanic tragedy.

Jack Phillips, Titanic's wireless operator, remained at his post and died

Who on board may have had an influence on history, even in a small way, had they survived?

All the people on board Titanic on the night of 15 April 1912 were 'ordinary people who were about to lead extraordinary lives'. There were many American industrialists whose death, it may be said, would have some influence on their businesses and the economy. In addition, one individual in particular, Archibald Butt (26 September 1865 – 15 April 1912), was a US Army officer and a journalist. Crucially, he provided service to two US Presidents during his career: Presidents Theodore Roosevelt and William Taft. At one stage, Butt was Taft's de facto chief negotiator on Federal budget issues. Previously, he had been Roosevelt's closest companion while in office. Being such an influential character in the life of these US presidents, one wonders would the course of history in the USA, or even the world, have been different if Butt had lived? Would Butt have helped maintain relations with Roosevelt and perhaps prevented Roosevelt's direct challenge to Taft – the founding of the Progressive Party which split the vote and thereby allowed Woodrow Wilson to be elected? Now that would have changed history!

BELOW
Titanic was to be the pride of the White Star Line

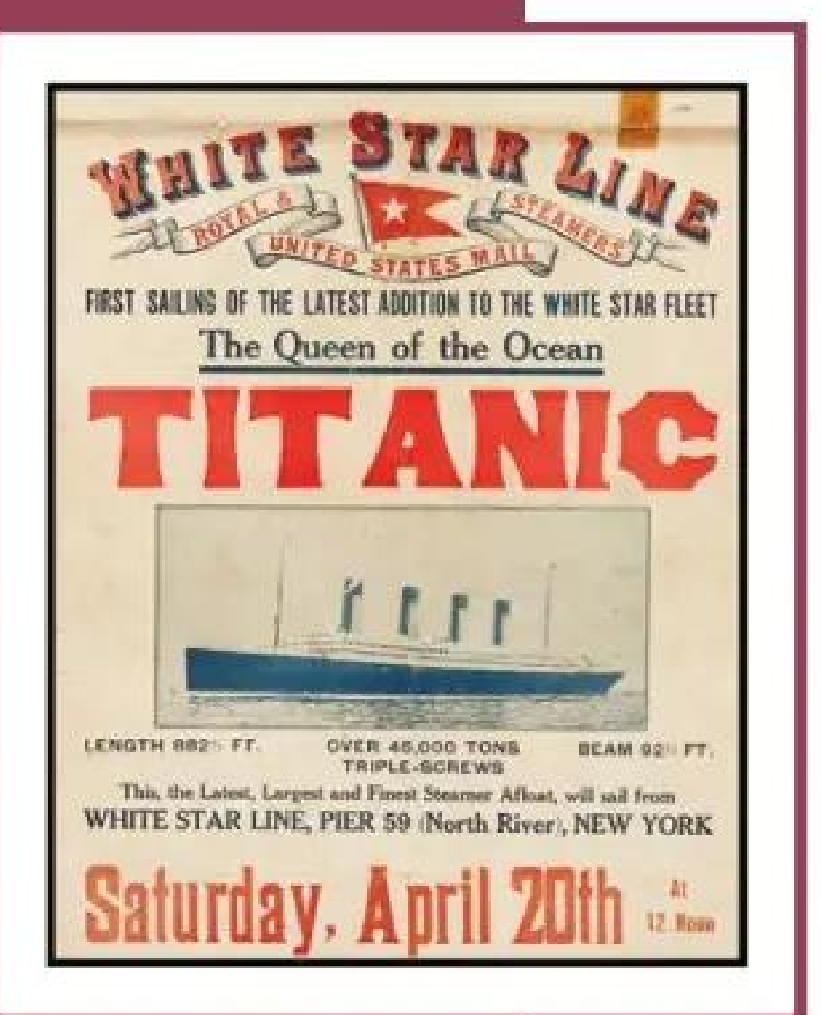
BELOW-INSET
Titanic survivors photographed from the rescue ship Carpathia

THE POSSIBILITY

1912-30

THE QUEEN OF THE OCEAN

If Titanic had survived her maiden voyage she would have dominated the trans-Atlantic passenger trade. What she would not have been able to avoid was World War I, and she would've been a prime target for German U-boats. After WWI, she would have continued to transport passengers from all walks of life to and fro across the Atlantic for many years to come, with the comfort and reliability that the White Star Line prided itself upon.



WHITE STAR LINE
ROYAL & UNITED STATES MAIL STEAMERS
FIRST SAILINGS OF THE LATEST ADDITION TO THE WHITE STAR FLEET
The Queen of the Ocean
TITANIC
LENGTH 882½ FT. OVER 45,000 TONS BEAM 92½ FT.
TRIPLE-SCREWS
This, the Latest, Largest and Finest Steamer Afloat, will sail from
WHITE STAR LINE, PIER 59 (North River), NEW YORK
Saturday, April 20th At 12 Noon

1912-30

TAKE OFF DELAYED

The first flight by the Wright brothers preceded Titanic by only nine years, and yet by her maiden voyage, aircraft innovation had changed dramatically. However, distance, size and cost were to keep commercial passenger-carrying aircraft very much a dream until at least two decades after Titanic sank. Had she survived, she would've definitely played a part in meeting the needs of mass transportation around the world, a scale of demand that could not have been met by even the most ambitious airline.

1912 – PRESENT

AMERICAN HEART AND MUSCLE

There were a number of high-ranking, high-flying and influential American industrialists and businessmen who died in the disaster. Had they survived, they would surely have continued to influence and drive the economy and infrastructure of the United States in its evolution as a world-leading economic power. The richest on board was John Jacob Astor, but the list of those lost includes railway executives, a mining magnate, a steel magnate and Isidor and Ida Straus – owners of Macy's department stores. But most passengers were ordinary people, and we can only guess how, had they lived, they may have, in their own way, changed the world.

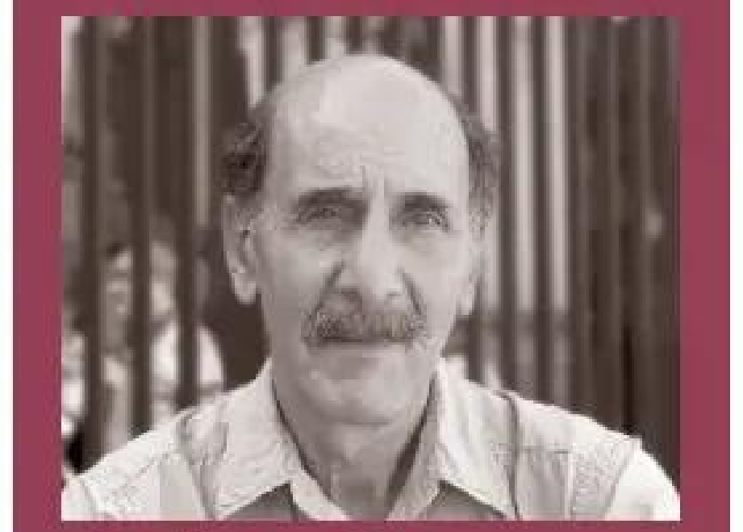
Allimages: © Alamy

What if...

BRITAIN & RUSSIA HAD GONE TO WAR OVER AFGHANISTAN?

A Russian defeat in the Middle East could have set Afghanistan up for success

EXPERT INSIGHT



Jules Stewart

Jules Stewart is a former journalist for Reuters who has reported from more than 30 countries. He is the author of ten books that deal mainly with the Anglo-Afghan wars of the 19th century and the Northwest Frontier. His latest book, *Cadiz: The Story of Europe's Oldest City*, is out now.

Britain launched two invasions of Afghanistan in the 19th Century to abort a perceived Russian incursion into the buffer state that separated British India from the Russian Empire. This was Great Gamesmanship at its most extreme: the two wars cost Britain nearly 30,000 casualties, failed to alter the status quo, and were undertaken on false intelligence. But what if Russia had taken the fatal step of dispatching an army into Afghanistan?

Empires must expand to survive. Stagnation behind closed borders poses a continual danger to security. The tsar's subjugation of Tashkent, Samarkand and Khiva has taken Cossack cavalry to the banks of the Oxus River, within striking distance of British India. The gate of entry is Afghanistan. Russian foreign minister Count Karl Nesselrode, emboldened by Britain's catastrophes of 1839 and 1879, moves from brinksmanship to action. In the summer the late 1800s, tsarist armies launch a two-pronged assault, north from the Oxus and east from Herat, to secure Afghanistan's military objectives before Calcutta can mobilise troops.

The viceroy, Lord Lytton, learns of the attack from Afghan agents in Kabul. He immediately telegraphs General Sir Frederick Haines, ordering him to dispatch two columns through the Khyber and Bolan passes. As a veteran of the Crimean War, Haines is an experienced hand in confronting the aggression of the Russians.

Nesselrode's reckless adventure triggers a chain of events that relegates Russia to the status of a second-rate power in Asia. Britain, having annexed the Punjab in 1849, has military units garrisoned on the Northwest Frontier abutting Afghanistan. Russian supply lines stretch hundreds of kilometres through hostile territory. They are effectively fighting a two-front war against a seasoned British Indian Army and an Afghan insurgency determined to oust the invader. The tsar's troops are routed in a matter of weeks. The way is now clear for Britain to 'liberate' the Russian-occupied khanates on Afghanistan's northern border, with the connivance of Abdul Rahman Khan, the 'Iron Emir', whose foreign policy has been under British control since the end of the Second Anglo-Afghan War.

The Soviet invasion of 1979 does not take place. There is no US-backed Mujahedin, no Taliban to put order in the civil war between factions. A stable Afghanistan is allowed to benefit from its position on the Asian trade route.

HOW WOULD IT BE DIFFERENT?

REAL TIMELINE

1839

The game begins
Imperial British forces march into Afghanistan, beginning the First Anglo-Afghan War. The result is a humiliating defeat for the British.
1839

The British Raj
After the Indian Rebellion, the East India Company transfer power to the British crown, beginning the rule of the British Raj.
1858

The Durand Line
An agreement between the Emir and Raj is signed with the Durand Line finalising British and Afghan spheres of influence.
12 November 1893

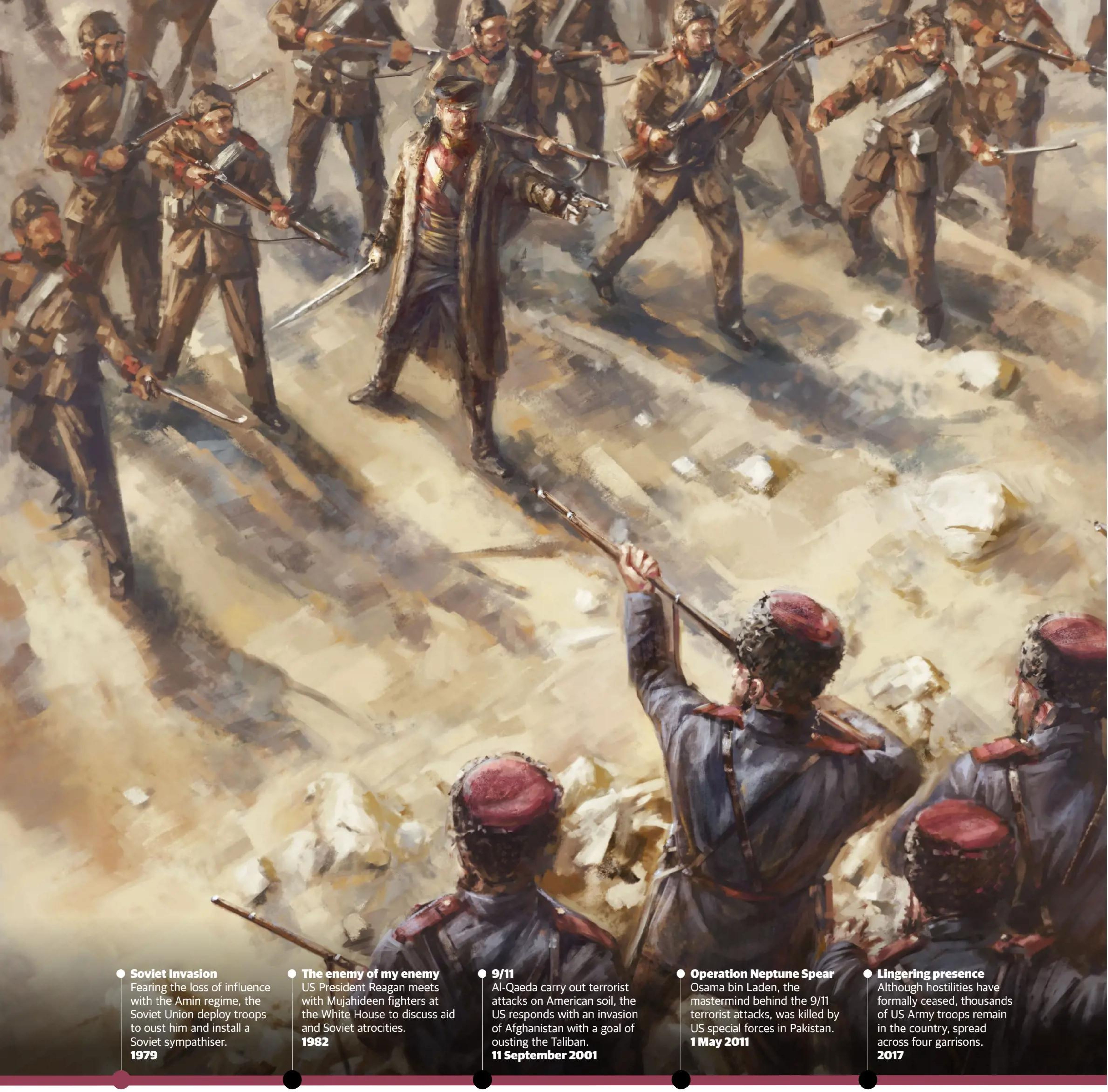
Hindu-German conspiracy
The Niedermayer-Hentig Expedition fails to bring in Afghanistan on the side of the Central Powers but it did create political turmoil that led to the assassination of the Emir.
1915-1916

The Red Revolution
White and Red factions vie for supremacy as Russia exits WWI. Britain supports the monarchist Whites and supplies them with more arms than any other country.
1917

ALTERNATE TIMELINE

An agreement is made
An agreement is made Emir Rahman and the Raj amicably agree a demarcation line between both countries. This precludes the need for the Durand Line to safeguard defensive access to India. **12 November 1893**

A mission is rejected
Abdur Rahman's son, the new emir, rebuffs a secret German mission sent to Kabul to persuade the Afghan ruler to invade British India in WWI.
1 March 1916



Soviet Invasion
Fearing the loss of influence with the Amin regime, the Soviet Union deploy troops to oust him and install a Soviet sympathiser.
1979

The enemy of my enemy
US President Reagan meets with Mujahideen fighters at the White House to discuss aid and Soviet atrocities.
1982

9/11
Al-Qaeda carry out terrorist attacks on American soil, the US responds with an invasion of Afghanistan with a goal of ousting the Taliban.
11 September 2001

Operation Neptune Spear
Osama bin Laden, the mastermind behind the 9/11 terrorist attacks, was killed by US special forces in Pakistan.
1 May 2011

Lingering presence
Although hostilities have formally ceased, thousands of US Army troops remain in the country, spread across four garrisons.
2017

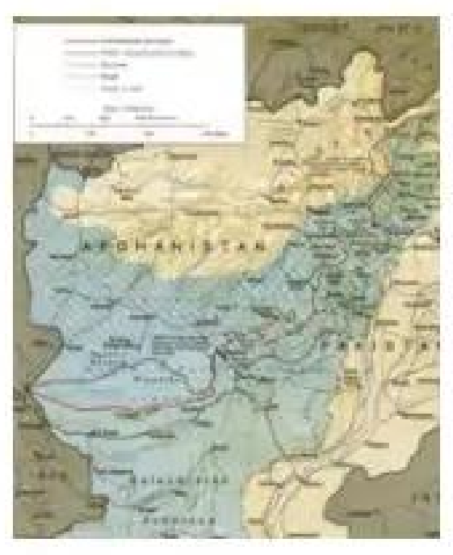
An attack is launched
King Amanullah, under pressure from extremist religious leaders at his court, launches an attack on British India, which becomes the Third Anglo-Afghan War.
1 May 1919

Negotiations are made
The Afghan Army is defeated, but in peace negotiations at Rawalpindi, Amanullah obtains the return of Afghan sovereignty in foreign policy from the British.
19 August 1919

A regime is installed
Mohammed Daoud Khan overthrows King Zahir Shah in a peaceful coup, and installs a regime focusing on developing Afghanistan's vast natural resources and modernising the country's infrastructure.
17 July 1973

The Soviet Union is powerless
The Soviet Union, in its weakened state and lacking access through Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, is powerless to contemplate an invasion of Afghanistan.
24 December 1979

A fortune is discovered
Afghanistan signs bilateral co-operation treaties with the US and European Union, who send trade missions and engineers to Kabul. The US Geological Survey announces a discovery of $1 trillion in mineral wealth under Afghan soil.
11 September 2001



The Durand Line is abolished
The Durand Line is abolished by agreement between Afghanistan and Pakistan, who work out a new line of demarcation to the satisfaction of the Pashtun tribes living on both sides.
9 November 2015

© Ian Hinley

What if...

THE ASSASSINATION OF RASPUTIN HAD FAILED?

Could the survival of "Russia's greatest love machine" have altered the course of World War I?

INTERVIEW WITH

© Coryne Hall

Coryne Hall

Coryne Hall is a historian and specialist in Romanov history. She is the author of a number of books on this subject including *Queen Victoria And The Romanovs* (2020) and *To Free The Romanovs* (2018).

Grigori Rasputin was a mystic who entered the Russian court when he claimed to heal the tsar's young son. However, in 1916, he met his end at the hands of assassins. Rasputin's bizarre death only served to further the impression of him as an almost supernatural entity. In the years since his demise, he has been the subject of numerous films, books and other popular media – even appearing as a villain in the *Kingsman* series of spy-comedies. But what if he had not died that night in July? What if the assassins had failed? Would his survival have been unimportant, leading only to his death at the hands of the Bolsheviks in 1917? Or could he have helped alter the course of World War I?

Who was Grigori Rasputin, and what was his role in the court?

Grigori Rasputin was a purported Siberian holy man who invaded his way into the court of Nicholas II because Empress Alexandra believed that he could cure her son of haemophilia. Quite how he did this, we don't know, but he was somehow able to calm the young Alexei down during his bleeding episodes, and the bleeding stopped, which in turn calmed Alexandra.

Because of his calming influence over both Alexei and Alexandra, he had access to the court and began to have influence in high places – for example, suggesting the appointment of ministers. After the outbreak of World War I in 1914, the following year, Nicholas went to command the front. Alexandra was left in charge, and Rasputin began interfering in the government, suggesting ideas about food supplies, troops and battles. When things started going badly, people started remembering Alexandra's German birth and became concerned.

Tell us a little about one of the chief conspirators in the assassination plot, Prince Felix Yusupov?

Yusupov was the richest man in Russia. He was flamboyant, believed to be homosexual (though I believe he was actually bisexual) and extremely generous. For example, in exile, he helped all the emigres who landed in France. Although at times he got pretty bad press for crossdressing and that sort of thing, he wasn't a bad man at all. His mother, Princess Zinaida Yusupova, had a great deal of influence over him – he got all his fortune from her, not from his father. People have suggested that he wanted to assassinate Rasputin to please his mother because his mother was opposed to Rasputin's influence on the tsarina and the idea of a separate peace for Germany. When Yusupov assassinated Rasputin, he was pretty sure that he wouldn't get prosecuted because his wife Irina's royal blood would prevent it happening, which was true. But it was the idea that there were German agents everywhere, and that they wanted to negotiate this separate peace, that ultimately prompted the assassination.

Why did they decide that Rasputin had to die?

There was a belief by many, including the British government and various people

© Getty Images

Main image source: © Getty Images

RIGHT
Nicholas II with his family. Alexandra is shown at his side, who Rasputin held the most influence over

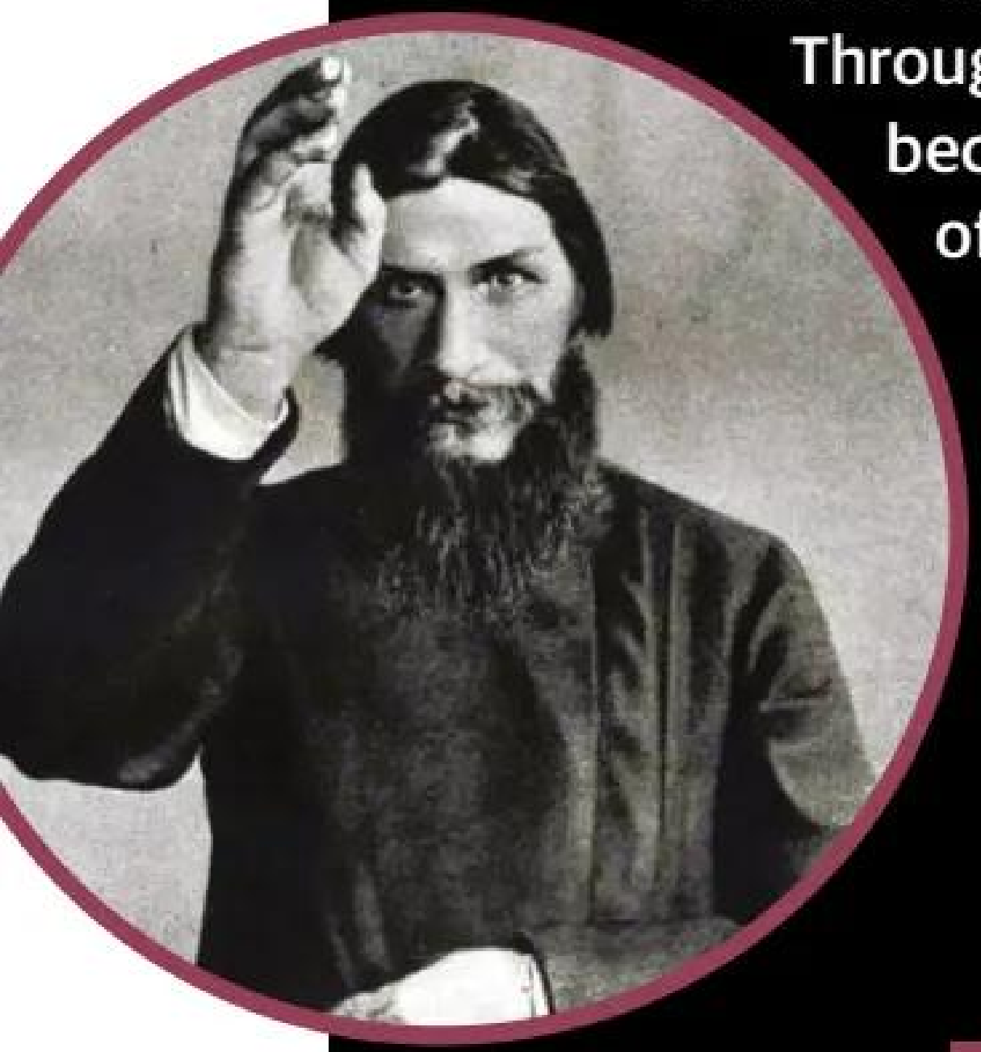
COSTUME JEWEL
HENRY STEIG

THE PAST

1869

THE LIFE OF RASPUTIN

Rasputin was born around 1869, but though sometimes referred to as 'the mad monk', he actually failed to take such vows. Despite having a young family, he abandoned them to wander the world, travelling to the holy land for a number of pilgrimages. Throughout these years, he also became known as something of a magician with powerful healing abilities. In 1903, he demonstrated these by seemingly curing Alexei, the young son of Tsar Nicholas II, of haemophilia.



1914

PREVIOUS ASSASSINATION ATTEMPT

Two years before his actual murder, in June of 1914, Rasputin was stabbed by a woman called Khioniya Guseva, who claimed he was 'seducing the innocent'. Following the attack, Guseva was deemed mentally unwell and was committed to an institution. Rasputin's personality is said to have undergone severe changes following that attack.

1916

THE MAN WHO WOULD NOT DIE

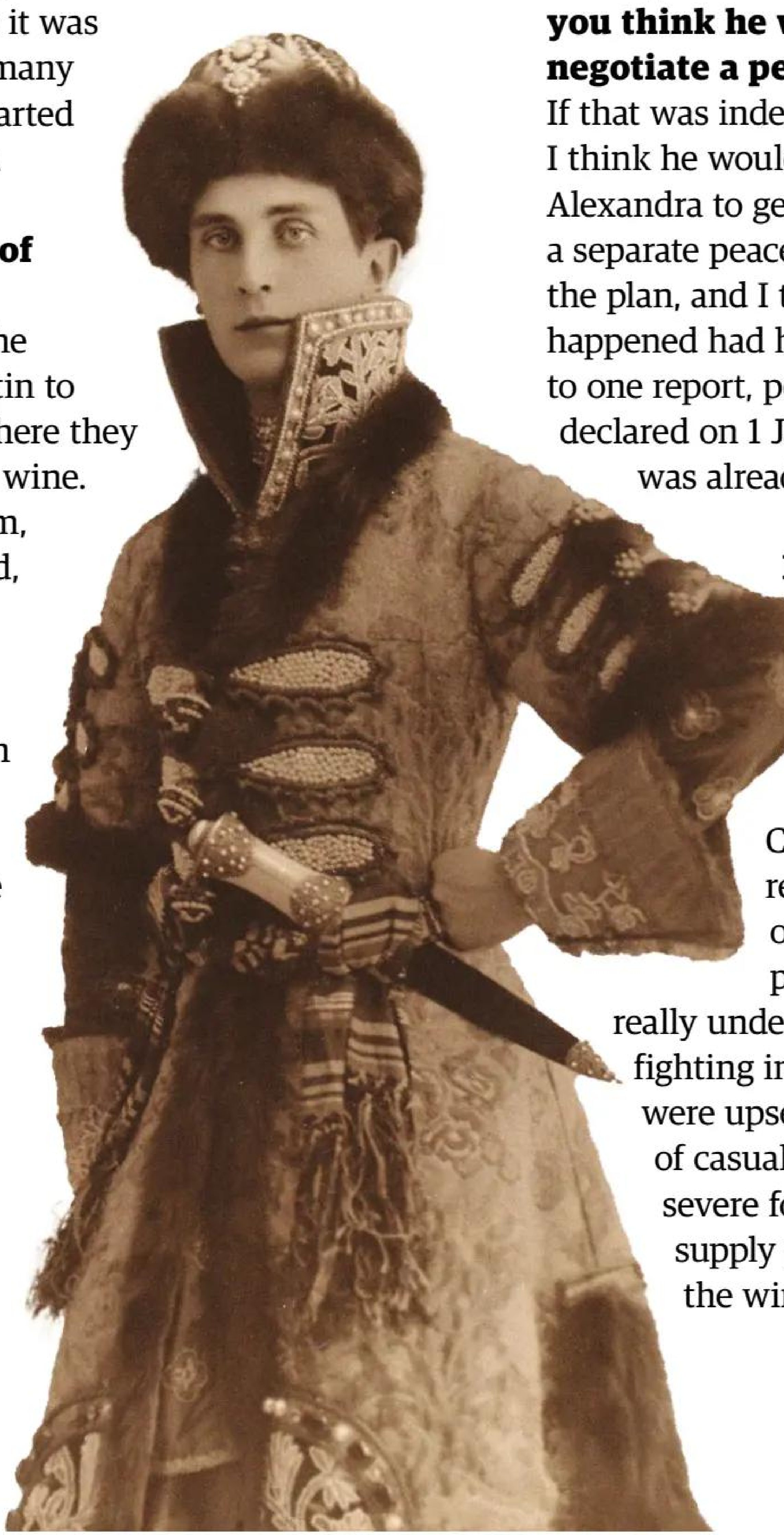
Despite his healing powers, Rasputin had a reputation for deviance and sexual debauchery that became legendary. His perceived supernatural abilities led to one particular myth surrounding his assassination. During the attack, he was said to have been fed poisoned cakes and wine, yet continued to live. When his attackers then shot their prey, he was still able to flee into the courtyard. He then either fell or was dumped into the river, where his remains were discovered. Over the years, Rasputin's legend has only grown due to films such as 1966's *Rasputin: The Mad Monk*, which portrayed him as a practically supernatural figure.

ABOVE
Rasputin depicted with a group of his followers and admirers

BELOW
Prince Felix Yusupov, one of the chief conspirators in the assassination

in Russia, such as the aforementioned Prince Felix Yusupov and the dowager empress, that Rasputin was in the pay of the Germans. Indeed, he wanted the tsar to negotiate a separate peace with Germany. If that had occurred, Germany would no longer be fighting on two fronts and could transfer all their troops to France. For Britain and the other allies, the results would be disastrous. Whether Rasputin was spying for the Germans, we don't know. But, at the time, the theory was that he wanted to negotiate a separate peace with Germany. So it was really because of this fear of Germany and a separate peace that they started wanting Rasputin out of the way.

What happened on the night of his murder?
Well, there are two versions. In the official version, Felix took Rasputin to the Moika palace in Petrograd, where they plied him with poison cakes and wine. When he didn't die, they shot him, but he escaped into the courtyard, where he was again shot in the back and finally killed. But that does not hold water for various reasons. For one thing, it's known now that Rasputin was killed by three bullets – all of them fired when he was sitting down. There was also no forensic evidence of poison or alcohol. Security experts say that this third shot in the centre of the forehead is a mark of an assassin, and various people believe that the British security services were somehow involved in the murder. It may have been that they were there in the planning. The chief suspect is a guy called Oswald Rayner, who was an old college friend of Felix from Oxford who had been sent out to Russia in 1916 because of his skill with languages. I suspect the 'official account' was a cover story, making it sound like the Russians did it as a patriotic deed. After all, imagine the publicity of the British having killed a Russian citizen in their own country. How would that have looked?



If Rasputin had survived, do you think he would have tried to negotiate a peace with Germany?
If that was indeed his plan, then certainly. I think he would have tried to persuade Alexandra to get the tsar to negotiate a separate peace. I think that that was the plan, and I think that would have happened had he survived. According to one report, peace was supposed to be declared on 1 January 1917. The rumour was already circulating.

If he had survived the assassination, is it likely Rasputin would have become another victim of the revolution?
Certainly, I think the revolution would still have occurred. People were pretty fed up. They didn't really understand why they were fighting in World War I and they were upset by the vast amount of casualties. There were also severe food shortages due to supply problems, especially in the winter of 1917 when food

couldn't be transported over the frozen railways. I think there was always going to be a revolution, though exactly when is another matter. But it's likely that whenever it did occur, Rasputin would have been among the many killed.

Assuming both his survival and escape from the fires of revolution, where might Rasputin have gone?
Due to his position as a sort of pseudo-holy man, he probably would have gone into hiding in a monastery – somewhere like Mount Athos in Greece. He'd been to Mount Athos before, but there were also plenty of remote monasteries in Russia, places that didn't hear about the revolution for years. He could have fled to one of these and stayed hidden for the rest of his life. His influence was with Alexandra, and when the revolution occurred, the Romanovs were all imprisoned and killed. That would have meant the end of Rasputin, too. If he had not been captured or killed, he most likely would have been in hiding.

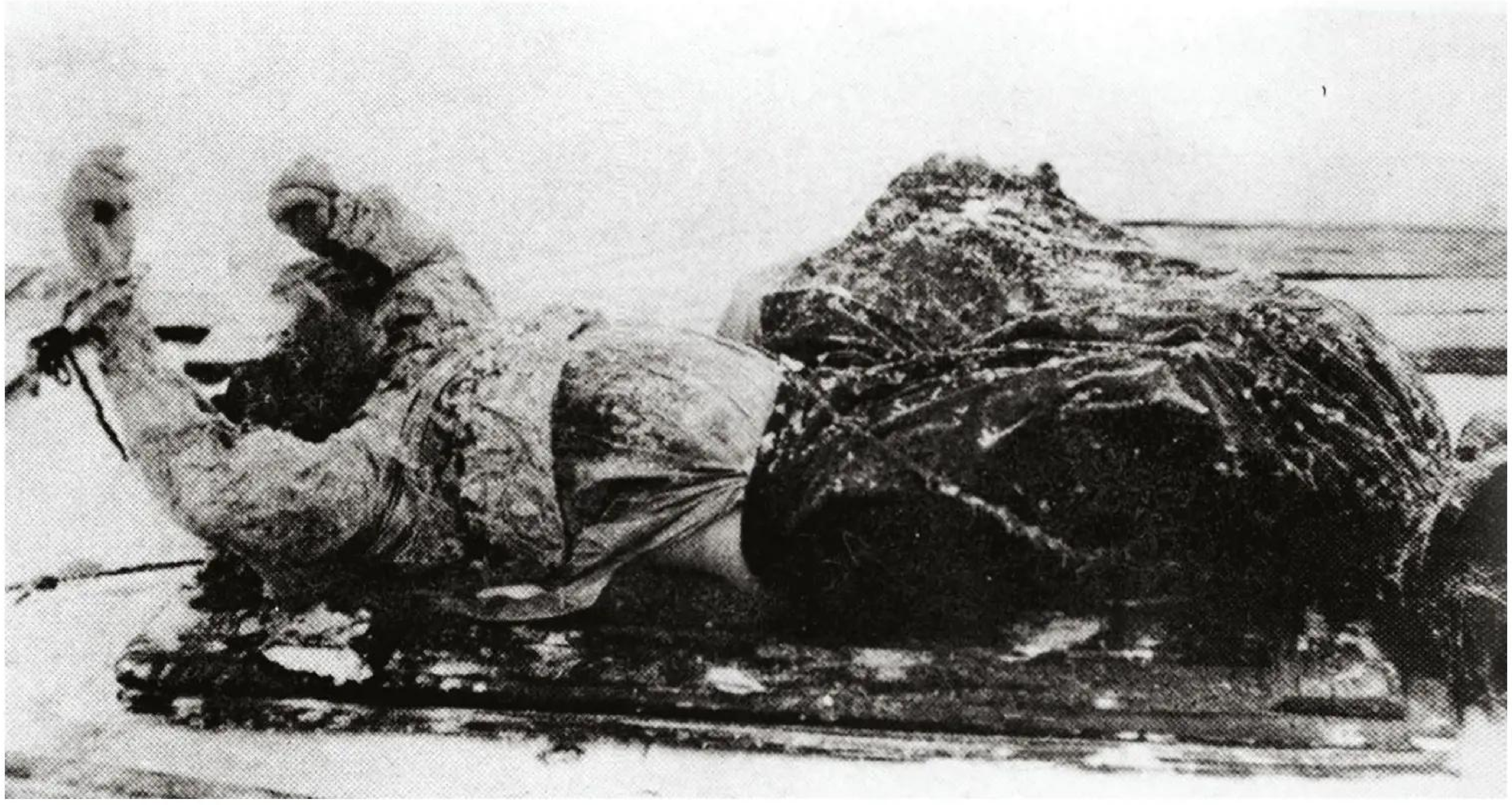
Would Rasputin's survival alone have mattered, or would he require the survival of the Romanovs in order to maintain influence?
Rasputin was there because of Alexei's haemophilia, and without that connection to Alexandra and Alexei, what has Rasputin really got to offer? It was all due to the power that he held over Alexandra. He used to say things like, "Without me, your son will die," or, "If I'm killed, you will lose your son and your crown within six months," and she believed him.

He used to say these prophecies to intentionally frighten Alexandra, but as a result, I think his influence really depended on Alexandra being there. It was only her that Rasputin had influence over. The tsar once actually said, "better one Rasputin than ten fits of hysterics a day". The empress used to get so hysterical over the problem with Alexei that she would have fits. Rasputin helped to calm her, but that was the only influence he had.

If Rasputin had survived, would it have ultimately made much of a difference?
I don't think it would have changed anything, not if the revolution had still occurred and the Romanovs fell as well. As I said, he depended on them, and without that link, he had nothing. He was only as good as they were in power, really. He had no other influence.

What if Rasputin had helped facilitate a separate peace deal with Germany? What could the consequences have been then?
This, of course, is another matter. It would have changed the course of the war. All the troops that were fighting in Russia would have been pulled over to France, and so the Germans would only be fighting on a single front. We could have lost the war, quite frankly, because of all the extra troops pulled out and pulled towards France and Britain. So yes, it would have been quite a disaster. So many people in Russia could see it: lots of high-up people. So, in this respect, were the idea of him attempting to persuade Alexandra of a separate peace true, then Rasputin's survival could have been very important. But we still don't know if it was. There are lots of clues, but so many documents remain unreleased.

BELOW
Rasputin's dead body after being pulled from the river following his assassination



THE POSSIBILITY

1918

THE END OF THE WAR?

If the various theories concerning Rasputin's involvement in a potential peace plan with Germany are true, then it could have meant a very different end to the war. Germany would have been able to move more troops to the western front and could have potentially defeated the allies. Without the Treaty of Versailles and the reparations, would this have meant that National Socialism would still have risen in Germany?

1918

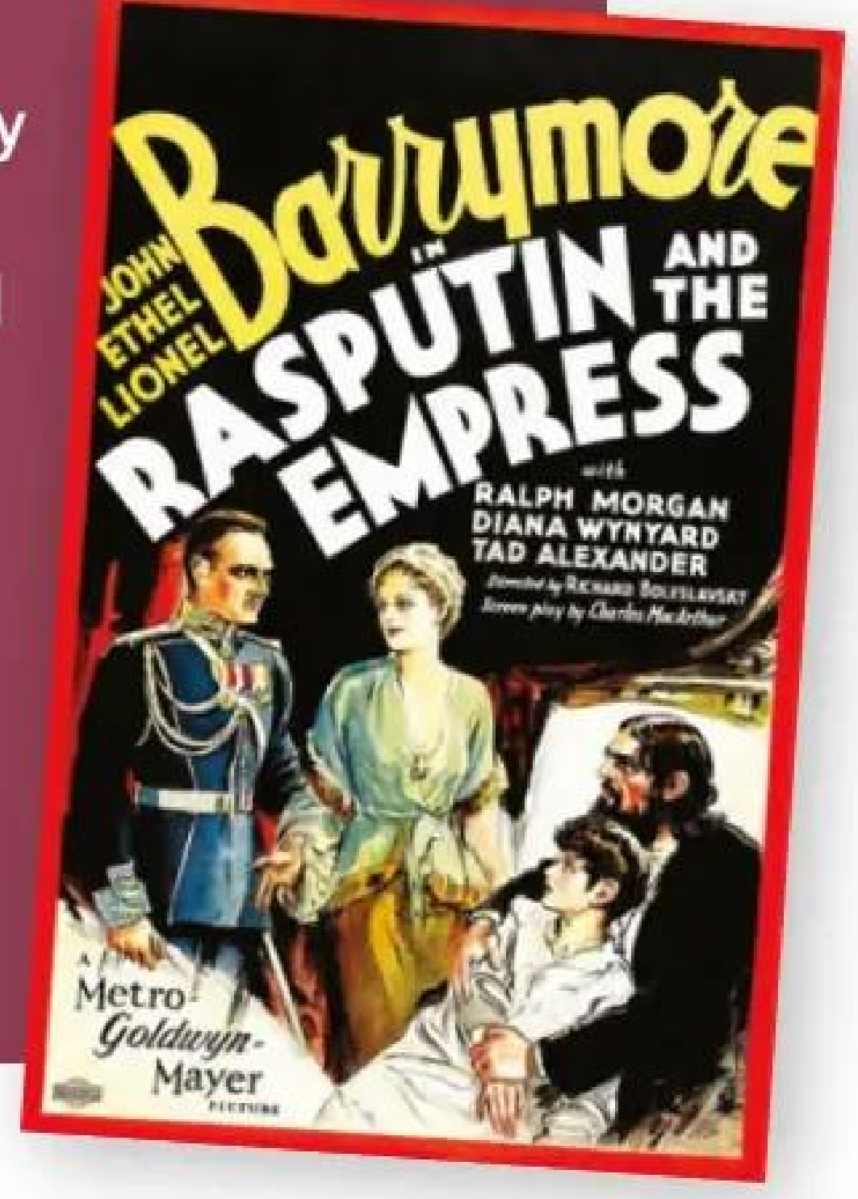
EXECUTION OF RUSSIAN IMPERIAL FAMILY

In July of 1918, as the Bolshevik revolution spread, the Romanovs were being kept in a house in Yekaterinburg. When White Russian forces began to approach the area, it became clear that a rescue would be disastrous for the Bolsheviks. On the 17th, the family was taken to the cellar of the house when soldiers burst in and brutally gunned them down. When the family's bodies were uncovered in 1991, the bodies of Alexei and one of his sisters were unaccounted for, adding fuel to the myth that Anastasia had survived. Would Rasputin have been in the cellar too?

1932

RASPUTIN AND THE EMPRESS

In 1932, MGM produced the lavish production of *Rasputin And The Empress*. The film starred John, Ethel and Lionel Barrymore and was expected to be a huge success for MGM. However, Yusupov's wife, Irina, objected strongly to her portrayal as having been under Rasputin's spell – particularly as the pair had never actually met. Irina sued and won £25,000. The case resulted in the practice of placing a disclaimer before the main film. Rasputin's survival may have meant a very different cinematic approach to 'true stories'!



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What if...

COMMUNISM HAD FAILED?

Without Russia as a standard bearer for communism, the rest of the world would have rejected the philosophy

INTERVIEW WITH

Richard Pipes

Richard Edgar Pipes was an expert in Russian history – particularly the Soviet Union. He was a Polish-American academic who, in 1976, headed up a team of analysts commissioned by the CIA to analyse the threat the Soviet Union posed to the US. He wrote written extensively about Russia in the 20th century. He died in 2018 at the age of 94.

What if the Bolsheviks hadn't come to power in Russia?

The Bolshevik uprising was a coup d'état, a power seizure. The masses were not involved, and, in fact, the general public did not know that anything was happening. If you read the newspapers from that time, you find that the theatres were operating, there were concerts, and nobody knew what was happening. It was [just] a real power seizure. So I think if the Bolsheviks had not seized power in November 1917, the most likely scenario is that the military - the officers - would have overthrown the Provisional Government and probably established some type of military dictatorship for a while and eventually reinstated Tsar Nicholas II to the throne.

Could the Bolshevik uprising have been stopped?

Well, I think if the Provisional Government that [the Bolsheviks] toppled had been more effective, then, yes, it could have been. But the trouble was that the prime minister [Alexander Kerensky] was a weak leader, and he didn't know how to cope with the Bolsheviks. So it's possible that if there had been a stronger leader, then the Bolsheviks would have been stopped. But the leadership was weak, and Russia had no experience in governing because they had so many years under an autocracy that they didn't develop an effective [government]. Kerensky didn't know how to stand up to Lenin.

Was there a turning point when events could have gone either way?

The Provisional Government could have rallied the army [to stop the uprising]. In August 1917 there was a general [Lavr Kornilov] - a very effective and popular man - who tried to save the Provisional Government [by rallying the army].

But Kerensky disarmed the army [in fear of a coup from Kornilov] and armed the Bolsheviks [to defeat the army], so when the uprising began in November, Kerensky had no one to help him. He really mismanaged the whole thing very badly. There were military people who realised the danger of Bolshevism and tried to stop it, and they wanted to help the Provisional Government, but [Kerensky] rejected their help and disarmed them. Kornilov sent troops to Petrograd, which was then the capital, and they were disarmed. And the Provisional Government armed its own opponents. So when November came, the army just stood by and didn't help.

Would Russia still have become a communist nation without the Bolshevik uprising?

Oh no, certainly not. The only support that the Bolsheviks had for communism at that time was that they wanted peace [from World War I]. The nation was quite tired of a war that wasn't getting anywhere, and the Bolsheviks were the only party that advocated peace. And that's what got them some support - not the communist [ideology]. Communism was never an [important] issue [for the Russian people].

What do you think Russia would have been like without a communist leadership?

Russia probably would have developed into what it is today - a kind of semi-autocratic and semi-democratic government. According to public opinion polls, Russians do not like democracy. They identify democracy with crime, anarchy and so on. And they like a strong hand - a strong ruler. So, probably, what you would have had is an autocratic regime with some civil rights and, very likely, private enterprise. They probably would have reinstated the monarchy in this semi-autocratic and semi-democratic regime. I think you would have had a parliament as you had before the war, before the revolution, which would have had limited powers, although they would have had to approve the legislation, but the monarchy would have been very strong.

How would Russia's relationship with the West have differed without communism?

I think [relations] would have been comparably better than they were under the communists. The Russian monarchy was, on the whole, friendly to the West and learned a lot from it. It was not anti-Western [indeed, Tsar Nicholas II and King George V were cousins]. The anti-Western strategy and tactics were brought in by the communists because they wanted to communise the whole world, including the West.

Without a communist Russia, would other nations like China still have followed suit?

I don't think so, no. Russia provided a model and also provided support - so, for example, China wouldn't have become communist if Russia was not communist. Communism was essentially imported from Russia, and I don't see that anywhere

FAR RIGHT
With the Bolshevik Revolution, Russia began its transformation from imperial autocracy to a communist state: the Soviet Union

> "The military would have eventually reinstated Tsar Nicholas II to the throne"

had anything like a [notable] communist party [before Russian influence].

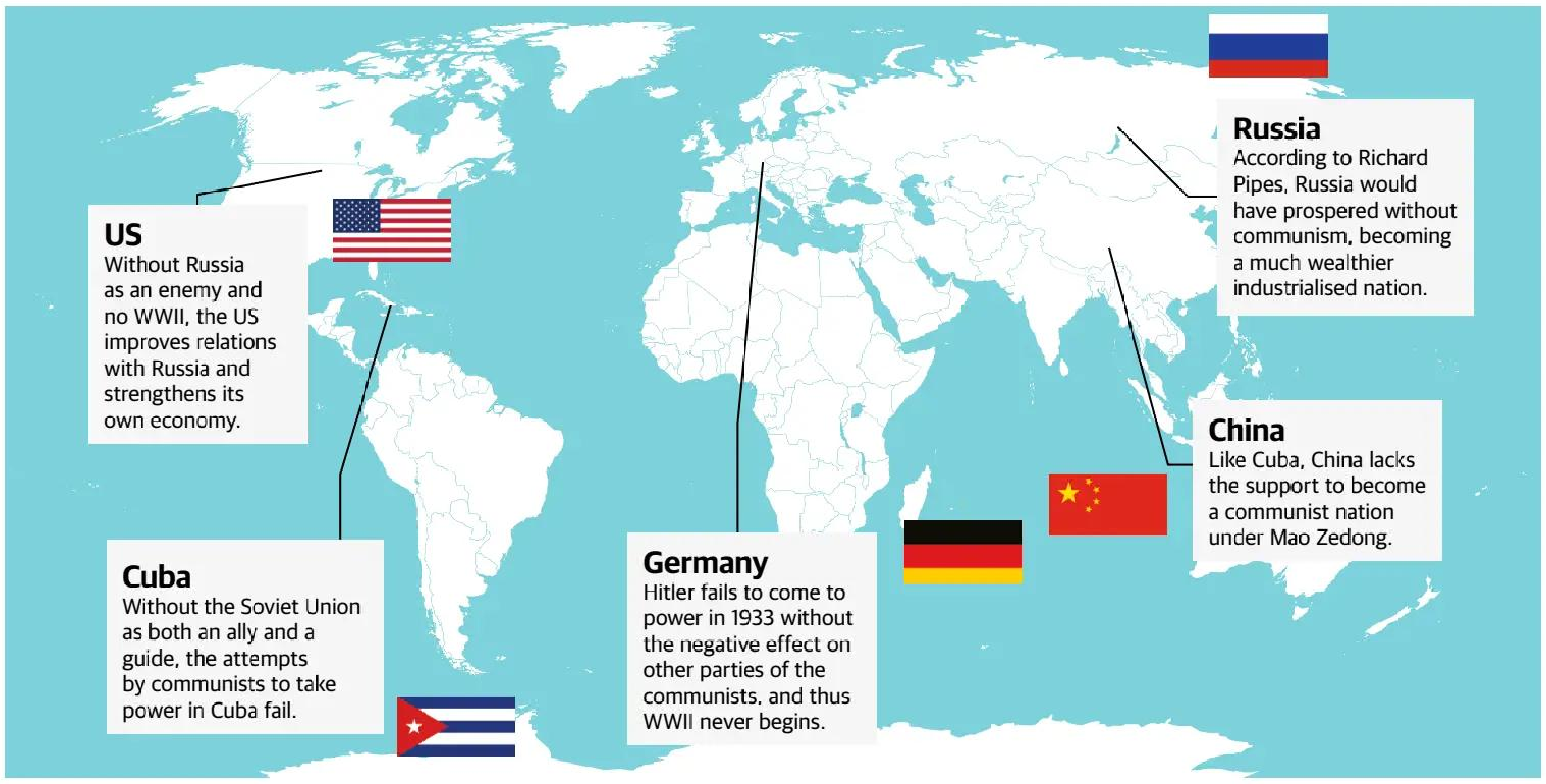
Would Russia still have had a civil war in 1918, and would they have entered World War II?
There would have been no civil war, certainly, and I think if there was no communism, there probably would have been no World War II, either, because this [conflict] broke out only because communists in Germany helped Hitler come to power, and in August 1939, Russia gave him carte blanche to launch a war against Poland, France and England. I can't guarantee [there would have been no war], but, you know, the Russians certainly helped Hitler come to power. If the communists [in Germany] in 1933 had aligned themselves with the social democrats, they would have won the elections [rather than Hitler's Nazi party]. But Stalin ordered the communists in Germany not to collaborate with the social democrats, so they divided the opposition, and Hitler won.

Was communism important for Russia? Did it help the country develop in any way?
It was a disaster in every respect. Tens of millions of people perished. It's true that they built up their industries, but the bulk of their industries were directed towards the military. And, as you can see today, after all these years of communism, Russia cannot export anything abroad except primary materials. You don't see any Russian consumer goods; all the consumer goods that we import here come from China, not from Russia. [Before the Bolshevik uprising] Russia was developing very rapidly towards an industrial country. In the 1890s, Russia had an industrial role and was leading in the world, and I think Russia would have become an industrial country without the communists. The communists industrialised but just in a military way. Under the communists, roughly 25 per cent of the gross domestic product (GDP) went on military expenditure.

Without communism, would Russia not have had figures like Josef Stalin and Vladimir Lenin?
There would have been no such dictatorship [and so no such dictators]. Russia before the revolution was a semi-constitutional country, but there were no dictatorships. The laws were obeyed, and parliament had a right to veto legislation, but there's no comparison between what happened before the revolution and what happened afterwards.

If Russia hadn't been losing to Germany in World War I, would the Bolsheviks still have seized power?
The Bolsheviks were [able to take power] not because people wanted communism but because they

> "There would have been no civil war, and I think if there was no communism, there probably would have been no World War II, either"



Russia
According to Richard Pipes, Russia would have prospered without communism, becoming a much wealthier industrialised nation.

US
Without Russia as an enemy and no WWII, the US improves relations with Russia and strengthens its own economy.

China
Like Cuba, China lacks the support to become a communist nation under Mao Zedong.

Cuba
Without the Soviet Union as both an ally and a guide, the attempts by communists to take power in Cuba fail.

Germany
Hitler fails to come to power in 1933 without the negative effect on other parties of the communists, and thus WWII never begins.

HOW WOULD IT BE DIFFERENT?

REAL TIMELINE

1914

WWI starts
World War I begins – a war that caused great loss to Russia, and one that was not supported by the general public.
28 July 1914

February Revolution
The February Revolution begins (although it was in March in the Gregorian calendar), with the public calling for the abdication of Tsar Nicholas II.
8 March 1917

Provisional Government formed
The Tsar abdicates and the Provisional Government is formed to run the country in the monarchy's stead.
15 March 1917

Kerensky appointed
Alexander Kerensky (left) becomes the prime minister of the Provisional Government.
24 July 1917

October Revolution
The October Revolution begins with the Bolsheviks, led by Lenin, deciding to seize power from the Provisional Government.
7 November 1917

Provisional Government is overthrown
Kerensky fails to stop the uprising and the Bolsheviks duly seize power by taking control of the Winter Palace.
8 November 1917

Uprising halted
The Provisional Government rallies the Russian army and stops the Bolshevik uprising in its tracks.
8 November 1917

wanted an end to [World War I], and if [Russia] had won the war, I think the communists would have had no chance. They brought in communism on an anti-war platform. Lenin was very careful not to propagate communism when he first came to power; he was just talking about peace, and when he made peace with the Germans a few months after seizing power, it was very popular. But, you know, in the elections to the constituent assembly that were held in November 1917, when the Bolsheviks were already in power, the Bolsheviks only got one-quarter of the vote. They did not have widespread support around the country, and to the extent that they had support, it was on the platform of peace, not of communism. The majority [of the public] were for socialism - for regular democratic socialist parties that were not [in favour of] dictatorship and abolition of private property and so on, [like the Bolsheviks were]. The [socialists] had the majority in the constituency general elections.

So would you argue that communism was forced upon Russia and the rest of the world?
Lenin had a very clear goal, but he knew that he couldn't establish a communist Russia without spreading communism worldwide, so his idea was to spread communism, first through Europe and then the rest of the world and he knew that communism in Russia alone could not work. Mao Zedong in China emulated both Lenin and Stalin, and then [communism started] in North Korea, Cuba and so on, but it never became a worldwide phenomenon.

ABOVE Street demonstrations such as this on 4 July 1917 were taking place in Petrograd several months prior to the Bolshevik uprising

Would the Cold War with America still have broken out in the latter half of the 20th century?
No, there would have been no Cold War. The Cold War was the result of the desire of the communists to spread communism worldwide - and particularly, to defeat the US as their main rival. I mean, before the Bolshevik Revolution, relations between Russia and America were quite friendly. I think without the revolution, relations would have been as good as they had been at least from the 18th century.

So overall, would Russia back then have been a better country without communism, in your opinion?
I think that Russia was developing reasonably well before World War I. It had its problems - [for example] there were too many peasants and not enough land, but these problems could have been solved. When the Bolshevik party came to power, they generally exacerbated all these problems rather than solving any of them.

And would Russia have been better off today if the Bolshevik uprising hadn't happened?
It would have been much better off, in my view - the mentality of the people would have been different. I think Russians today are confused about where they belong. They don't feel they belong to the West, but they don't belong to the East [either], so they're isolated. Without the Bolshevik Revolution telling them for 70 years they were unique and they were the future, they would have been able to accommodate themselves to the world at large.

Brest-Litovsk
The Bolsheviks sign the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk with Germany, bringing Russia's involvement in World War I to an end.
3 March 1918

Russian Civil War
The Russian Civil War between the Bolsheviks - now the Communist Party - and their enemies begins, raging for three bitter years.
June 1918

World War II ends
Nazi Germany surrenders to the Soviet Union following the suicide of Hitler as the Soviets successfully take Berlin.
9 May 1945

Cuban Missile Crisis
The world comes close to a nuclear war as the communist Soviets and capitalist Americans clash in the Cuban Missile Crisis.
14-28 October 1962

ALTERNATE TIMELINE

Military coup
The military rises up and overthrows Kerensky, reinstating Tsar Nicholas II to the throne and restoring Russia's monarchy.
December 1917

Hitler is stalled
Without anti-communist support, Hitler fails to seize power and the Nazis do not take control of Germany.
1933

Russia prospers
Without America as an enemy, Russia grows as a dominant industrial nation and, as a result, becomes one of the greatest world powers.
1960s

Communism fails
Without a communist Soviet Russia as a benchmark, communism fails in other countries around the globe.
1970s

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What if...

GERMANY HAD WON WWI?

A German victory in the First World War would set them up as the de facto dominant force in Europe

INTERVIEW WITH

Stephen Badsey

Stephen Badsey is a professor of Conflict Studies at the University of Wolverhampton. An internationally recognised military historian, he has written or edited more than 120 books and articles, his writings have been translated into eight languages and he appears frequently on television and in other media.

What would have happened if Germany had won World War I?

It depends on when they win it. If they win a short war in 1914, with the Schlieffen Plan [the plan to quickly defeat the French first to avoid fighting on two fronts] working, it's different than if they win a negotiated victory after a long, hard fight at the end of 1916 or early in 1917, which is the other possibility. Either way, you get a large German Empire dominating central and Western Europe. What is likely to happen is you get a very strong and dominant Germany, [but one] that is not quite as bad as Hitler's Germany in two respects. One is that it doesn't have a plan for the genocide of the Jewish population of Europe – at least, we don't think it would have – and it doesn't have a plan for global domination. With those two exceptions, you get a very nasty, racist, expansionist state with enough power in terms of economic and political power to dominate Europe, which means it can do something no power had ever been able to do: it can afford to have an extremely large and extremely good army, and it can also afford to have an extremely good navy, large enough to defeat the Royal Navy. They don't actually have to invade Britain, although they probably would, but they can just starve it into submission.

Would this have led to another war?

If Germany wins World War I, they get into a strong position [against the rest of Europe], and then there's almost certainly a war about ten years later, in which the British are defeated. So, the British have absolutely no motive for letting this happen. In 1914, the British have three things that nobody else on the planet has got: they've got the world's only global empire with massive resources, they've got dominant control of the world's financial systems through London, and they've got the biggest and most powerful navy in the world. So, why should they sit there doing nothing while a country that will almost certainly defeat them in the next war ten years on establishes that position [to leapfrog them]?

Without a German defeat, is there any chance of someone like Hitler still rising to power?

The short answer is yes. Mussolini came to power in Italy, and Italy was on the winning side in World War I. The Treaty of Versailles was [Hitler's] excuse; no reputable historians believe that World War II leads inevitably from World War I. The idea that a botched peace treaty in 1919 inevitably leads to World War II is not historically accurate.

What might a victorious German Empire have looked like in practice?

Again, it depends on when it happens. At the start of the war in 1914, the Germans have no real concept of any war aims except reaching the enemy capital, which had been their experience in the Franco-Prussian War from 1870 to 1871, for example. When that fails in September 1914, they realise they're going to need some war aims, so they come up with something called the 'Septemberprogramm'. This is a plan for the domination of Belgium as a client state, the Netherlands, which is neutral, the annexation of large parts of northern France with its industry, an absorption of parts of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and the establishment of a German

RIGHT
A company believed to be the Public Schools Battalion (16th Battalion), prior to the Battle of the Somme, 1916

FAR RIGHT
If Germany had won WWI against Britain then Adolf Hitler might not have become a German leader

> "What is likely to happen is you get a very strong and dominant Germany that is not quite as bad as Hitler's Germany"

> "We might well have seen a war against that kind of German empire […] in a manner not too dissimilar to WWII"

frontier further to the East. All of this would produce a German-dominated super-state that would reach roughly from Calais to as far east as Kyiv.

Could Germany have won the war with the entrance of the United States?

As it happened, the Germans made the conscious decision instead to try to go for another total win by introducing unrestricted submarine warfare in January to February 1917 in an attempt to starve the British out, and that was the principal decision that brought the US into the war. Once the US is in the war as well, it's difficult for the Germans to come up with any kind of win; they make a last attempt with their spring offensives after the collapse of Russia in the spring of 1918, but these do not succeed.

What would a German victory in World War I have meant for the US?

A dominant Germany in Europe does not pose a direct threat to the United States, and given the physical distances involved with the Atlantic, it is entirely possible that the United States would simply accept this position. President Woodrow Wilson had been re-elected in 1916 on the basis of having kept the United States out of World War I, but when German submarines started sinking American transport ships on the high seas in early 1917, they are compelled to enter the war. So, in the short term, the United States might well have taken the view that this was no threat to it. What might then happen half a century on is an open question, but if Germany had developed into the kind of powerful, aggressive state most historians think it would, it's entirely possible it would have challenged in South and Central America, or it might have challenged in the Atlantic or the Pacific [Oceans]. We might well have seen a war against that kind of German empire, going to war with the United States in a manner not too dissimilar to World War II.

How would Britain have responded?

Even if there is a complete and spectacular German victory in 1914, which is not likely, as people have been trying to make a quick German win with the Schlieffen Plan work perfectly more or less ever since the battle actually took place. Even if that happens and France surrenders as it did in 1914, the imperative for the British to avoid the domination by any one power of Europe is so great that you would get a situation similar to that which the British faced with France under Napoleon a century earlier, that they would just keep rebuilding coalitions against this hostile Germany. And you could envisage that the British could just about mount the equivalent of D-Day, taking a British counter-invasion, either of France, Belgium or even the German coastline some time in 1916. So hypothetically you might have seen D-Day several decades before it took place.

If the US hadn't entered the war, would they still have grown into the global superpower they are today, or would they be more isolated?

The US entry into World War I established its position as an important global power. Indeed, one of the effects of World War I is that the new Soviet Union and the US emerge as non-European powers for the first time, playing a major role in the international system. And the effect of World War II is to establish the domination of those two non-European powers, the US and Soviet Union, with the European powers no longer playing the role they had played recently. This lasts through to the end of the Cold War in 1990 and 1991. Would the US have emerged into its assumption after 1945 of global interests without its involvement in World War I? I would say it's unlikely. If Germany doesn't threaten the US or its interests, you're going to see a more isolationist US. If a confident, expansionist, aggressive and militaristic Germany starts to threaten the US, the US would almost certainly respond.

Would the League of Nations and, ultimately, the United Nations still have materialised under a German victory?

No, the League of Nations was very much the ideal of President Woodrow Wilson. And, of course, the US itself doesn't join the League of Nations, but it is a product of the peace of Paris, including the Treaty of Versailles in 1919. What you would see is something with some kind of form in Europe, an extension of what is known as the Zollverein, the pan-German Customs Union of the 19th century, forming into

HOW WOULD IT BE DIFFERENT?

REAL TIMELINE

1914

- **Franz Ferdinand assassinated**
  The heir to the throne of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, Franz Ferdinand, and his wife Sophie are assassinated while on a visit in Sarajevo, Bosnia.
  28 June 1914

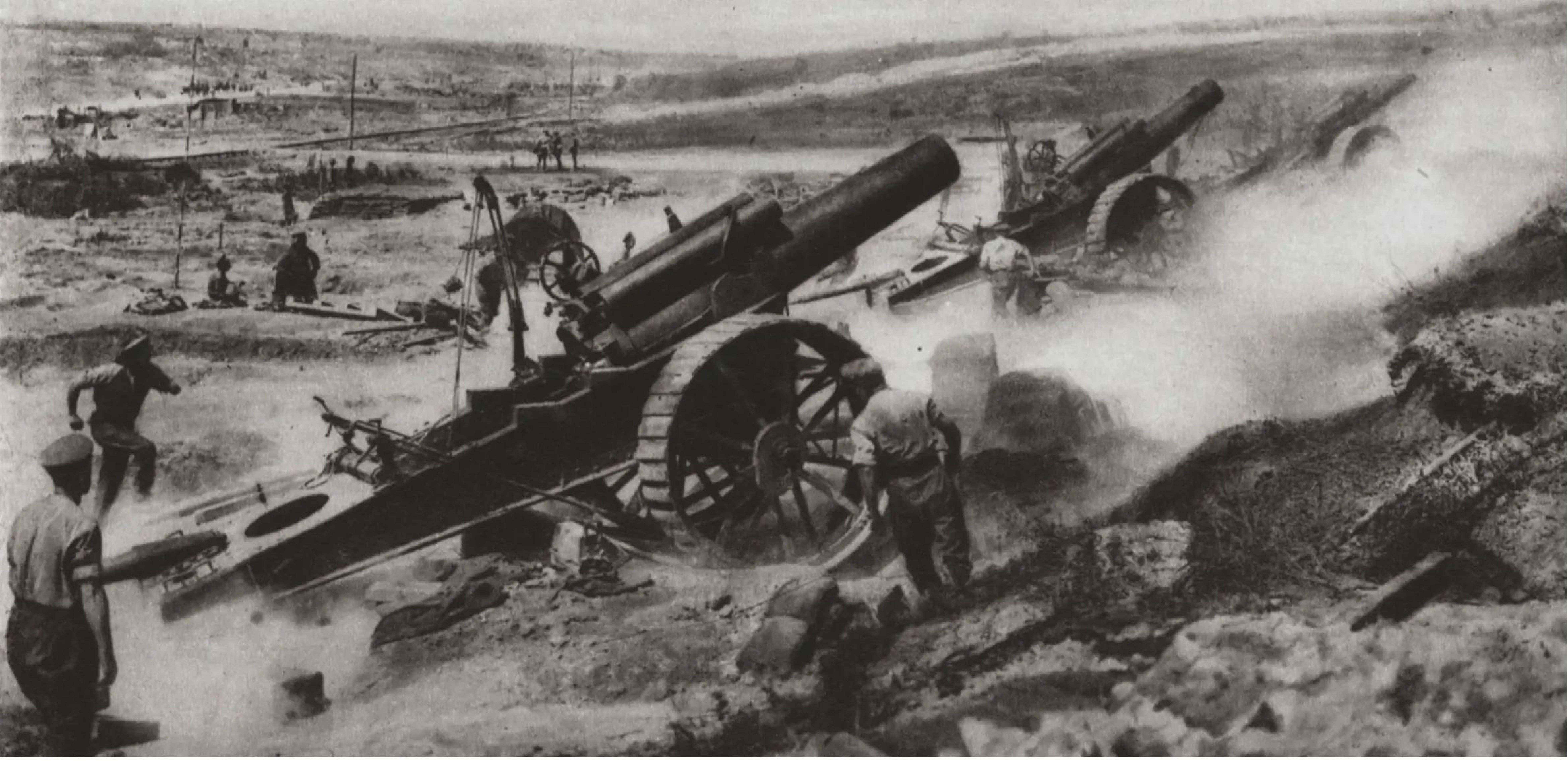
- **Germany offers support**
  Kaiser Wilhelm II offers German support for Austria-Hungary against Serbia. This leads to Austria-Hungary ultimately declaring war on Serbia on 28 July.
  5 July 1914

- **Declaration of war**
  After Austria-Hungary declares war on Serbia, Germany in turn declares war on Russia and, two days later, also on France. After Germany invades Belgium, Britain feels forced to enter the war as well.
  1 August 1914

- **The Battle of Mons**
  The British Expeditionary Force (BEF) retreats after the Battle of Mons with the advancing German First Army making ground.
  23 August 1914

- **The Schlieffen Plan**
  Germany must decide whether to try for an immediate outright victory in Western Europe with their Schlieffen Plan, or engage in a longer war with the Allied nations.
  September 1914

ALTERNATE TIMELINE



ABOVE
WWI saw true industrial warfare for the first time in history

something which would bear some resemblance to the modern EU but only to the extent that it would be a very large trading block. Its laws, traditions and attitudes towards human rights would have been completely different. But no, with a German victory in WWI, the League of Nations and from it at the end of World War II, the United Nations, I don't think there's any way this would happen.

Would Russia still have become the Soviet Union?

Russia had its own problems. It had already had its minor revolution, the uprisings of 1905, leading to political reforms and the creation of a Russian parliament, the Duma. If France is defeated in 1914, Russia probably makes peace with Germany and Austria-Hungary fairly quickly. What basis that will be made on is very hard to say at the moment, but it will almost certainly have been a limited Russian defeat. But what happens after that is not particularly connected with the war; it is the strain of fighting the war over the three-year period that precipitates the Russian political and economic collapse, and without that, the idea of a Russian revolution in the way it actually happened is not a certainty.

Do you think World War II would have still happened?

If you got the Germany I've described, that has been successful in World War I and has achieved this kind of domination, who is going to fight it and why? The only thing that works is looking at the British strategy before, against revolutionary and Napoleonic France, where the British kept putting together alliances, kept being defeated and just wouldn't give up until Napoleon was finally defeated, and that war lasted for a quarter of a century. So you could easily envisage the British drawing on the resources of their empire, simply refusing to accept German victory and carrying out a long and persistent war on the peripheries of Europe and around the world to prevent this domination, which could have gone on for decades. Whether Britain could have brought the US in on their side is hard to construct a scenario for, but that depends almost entirely on whether Germany tries to starve Britain into submission by cutting off its supply routes.

Trench warfare
Scrapping the Schlieffen Plan, trenches are dug along the Western Front, foreshadowing a long stalemate.
November 1914

Blockade of Britain
In an attempt to starve the British, Germany begins unrestricted submarine warfare, sinking any vessels bound for Britain.
February 1915

Battle of the Somme
In the bloodiest day of fighting in British military history, 60,000 Allied soldiers are dead, wounded or missing after a disastrous battle.
1 July 1916

The US enters the war
After continued sinking of vessels, the US enters the war, mobilising troops immediately, while the Great German Withdrawal takes place.
6 April 1917

US troops arrive
The first US troops arrive in France and the Allies begin significant advancements against the Germans.
25 June 1917

Brest-Litovsk
Russia agrees to a negotiated peace with Germany in the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk.
3 March 1918

Spring Offensive
The German Spring Offensive fails to break down the Allied front line.
April 1918

Armistice Day
The war comes to an end as a battered Germany signs an armistice with the Allies.
11 November 1918

Treaty of Versailles
The Treaty of Versailles is signed, imposing strict limitations on Germany following their defeat in the war.
28 June 1919

Germany attacks
The Germans decide to go ahead with the Schlieffen Plan, planning sweeping attacks across Western Europe.
November 1914

France surrenders
The French surrender to Germany, with other countries in Western Europe soon following suit, apart from Britain.
December 1914

Blockade of Britain
Germany attempts to starve the British island nation through their extensive U-Boat submarine campaign.
February 1915

Russian peace
Russia enters into a negotiated peace with Germany before the war with Britain escalates further.
June 1915

Invasion
Germany attempts to invade Britain after annexing large parts of Western Europe.
September 1915

D-Day
After resisting a German invasion, Britain decides to launch a ground assault on Western Europe.
March 1916

No US help
With its resources floundering, Britain makes another failed attempt to bring America into the war on their side.
1917

Britain loses
Ultimately, after drawing on the resources of their entire empire, Britain loses the war, leading to a dominant Germany in Europe.
1924

What if...

THE US HAD INVADED CANADA?

By provoking the British in North America, would the United States have gained a 46th state?

EXPERT INSIGHT

Blaine L Pardoe

Blaine Pardoe is a *New York Times* bestselling author of military history. Two of his books deal with speculative history – *The Fires Of October* on the Cuban Missile Crisis and *Never Wars – The US Plans To Invade The World*. In *Never Wars*, he draws on a US plan to invade Canada.

Originally titled, 'Assumption – war has broken out with Great Britain', the 1904/05 plan by the United States to invade Canada was the first of its plans for wars to be drafted. While crude by modern war-planning scenarios, it was audacious in its strategic thinking. Rather than fight Britain on its terms, the United States would strike where the nation was easiest to injure – Canada. Most likely this plan was devised after the tensions of the Venezuela Crisis of 1903-04.

The plan was aimed at crippling Britain economically. If Canada were taken from Britain, it would cut off nearly a third of the island nation's wheat and over 75 per cent of the nickel. Better yet, with a mostly undefended border, Canada was ripe pickings. The only downside to attacking the US's neighbour to the north was its vast size – it was akin to sending armies into Russia.

Thus, the US plan for attacking Canada was not an all-out invasion but rather a direct attack across the Saint Lawrence Seaway to seize Fort Erie, Niagara Falls and the Welland Canal. Once secured, US cavalry forces would strike northward to Toronto, cutting off rail service and raiding at will.

Canada could do little to stop an invasion as the bridges across the Saint Lawrence were seized. With only roughly 12,000 militia and officers spread out across the vast territory, they would be fighting with limited ammunition, and only two batteries of artillery were posted in the Niagara area where the fighting would be the heaviest. The Canadians had a total of 12 machine guns in their entire defensive force, so defending Canada relied on arming private citizen gun clubs with Lee Rifles and giving them almost no formal training. With the US striking quickly, the closest professional military help for the Canadians was five hours away by rail (the Royal Canadian Dragoons). By the time they arrived, the invasion force would have taken its objectives – cutting off the Saint Lawrence Seaway, Fort Erie and forming a compact defensive line around Niagara.

The US would be deploying a large number of troops, a full division of troops along with an additional division's worth of artillery and cavalry in reserve. US machine guns would be concentrated in the drive of seizing the canal and securing Toronto. The US army would have had little opposition in securing Ontario as a whole, cutting Canada in half.

Britain would respond, and the United States knew that. But by the time any British relief forces would have arrived, the US would be deeply entrenched and reinforced. The clashes by British troops to attempt to retake Toronto would have taken on a Great War effect, with troops rushing massed artillery and machine guns. With the US massing troops in Maine, threatening to cut off Halifax and resupply, Great Britain would have to face losing a significant and strategic portion of Canada.

Ontario would have become the 46th American state, while Britain would be forced to garrison the rest of Canada as peace settled in.

HOW WOULD IT BE DIFFERENT?

REAL TIMELINE

1902

Venezuelan Crisis
A naval stand-off in Venezuela heightens tensions between the US, Britain and other major European powers like Germany.
1902-03

New Canadian military
The Canadian military is reformed with new corps being appointed and a new navy beginning to be constructed in 1911.
1904

WW1 begins
After the assassination of Archduke Ferdinand, the major European powers declare war. The BEF is sent to France.
28 July 1914

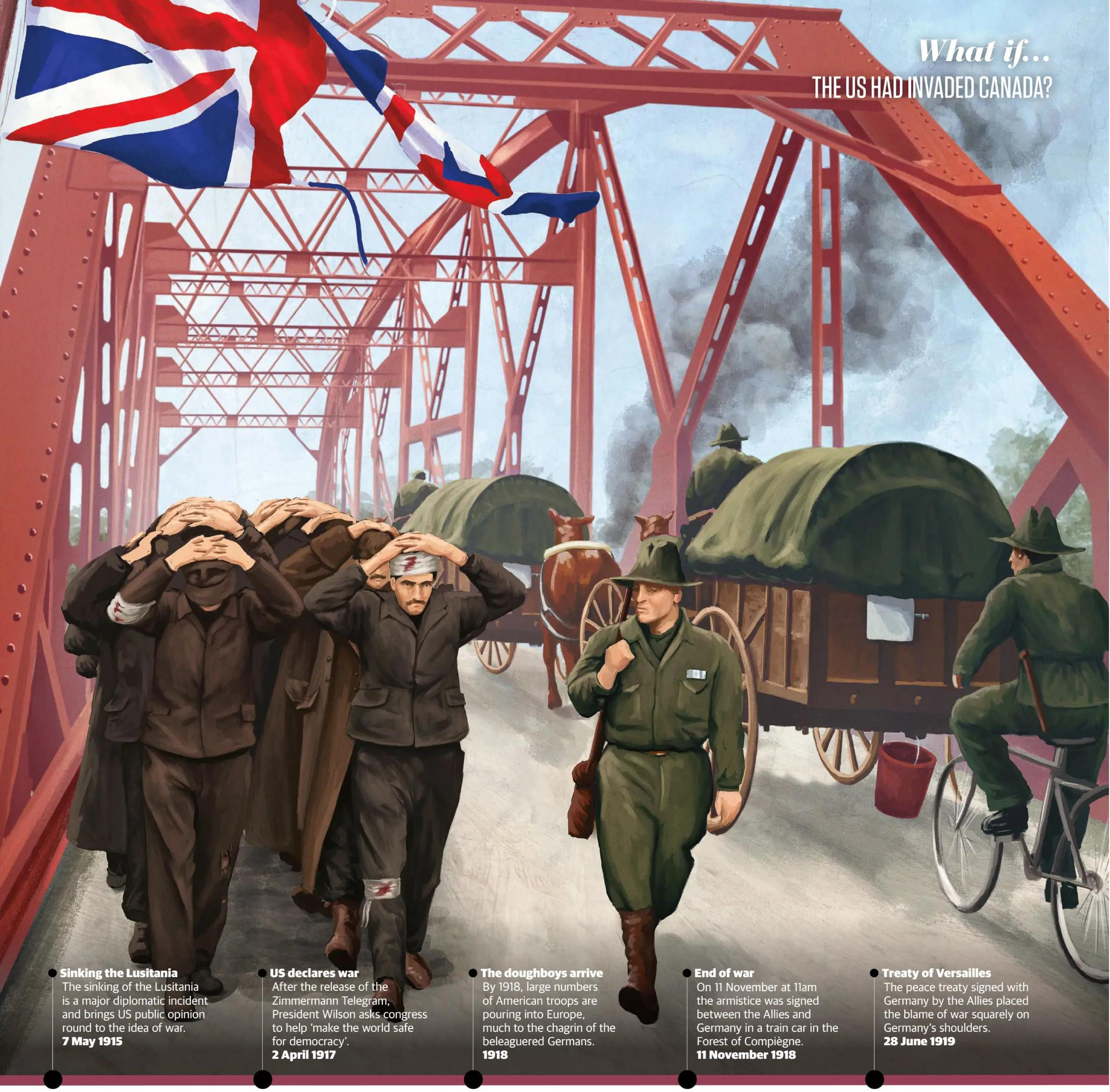
Arms supply
The US, an industrial powerhouse, would supply Europe with over $2.2 billion worth of arms and munitions.
August 1914 - March 1917

Battle of Mons
Despite inflicting numerous casualties on the numerically superior Germans, the BEF is forced to give ground but retreat in good order.
23 August 1914

ALTERNATE TIMELINE

Protecting the Front
British garrison forces reinforce Quebec to deter further American adventurism. Tensions remain high between Britain and the US as both sides build forts. **1905-14**

BEF formed
The outbreak of the Great War leaves Britain with a significantly smaller BEF force because of troops tied down in Canada.
Summer 1914



Sinking the Lusitania
The sinking of the Lusitania is a major diplomatic incident and brings US public opinion round to the idea of war.
7 May 1915

US declares war
After the release of the Zimmermann Telegram, President Wilson asks congress to help 'make the world safe for democracy'.
2 April 1917

The doughboys arrive
By 1918, large numbers of American troops are pouring into Europe, much to the chagrin of the beleaguered Germans.
1918

End of war
On 11 November at 11am the armistice was signed between the Allies and Germany in a train car in the Forest of Compiègne.
11 November 1918

Treaty of Versailles
The peace treaty signed with Germany by the Allies placed the blame of war squarely on Germany's shoulders.
28 June 1919

US refuse neutrality
With a British army in the north, the US refuses to sell munitions to Britain but agrees to supply France and Germany.
4 August 1914

The rout of Mons
The BEF is driven back, causing a collapse of the French lines. The Allies fall back, giving Germany significant territorial gains.
23 August 1914

Coastal battles
The German armies swing north and secure strategic ports. Dunkirk and Calais fall and the Channel becomes a contested passage.
10 September 1914

Battle of Paris
A defensive arc around Paris is formed. The British and French hold the line, which quickly devolves into a bloody stalemate.
24 November 1914

US seizes RMS Lusitania
RMS Lusitania is laden with illegal munitions, and is seized in New York harbour. Tensions between Britain and the US escalate.
10 December 1914

Unrestricted naval warfare
The US selling and shipping of munitions to Germany forces Britain to call for unrestricted naval warfare.
4 February 1915

Quebec independence movement
In retaliation, the US arms Quebec nationalists. Uprisings take place and the British garrison is soon under siege.
March 1915-16

WWI ends
France sues for peace as Britain sends the BEF overseas to cope with the uprisings. Britain and France are blamed for the war.
10 March 1916

© Kevin McGivern

What if...

THE 1929 WALL STREET CRASH HAD BEEN AVERTED?

A seismic financial shock wave ruins the hopes and dreams of millions and turns boom to bust

INTERVIEW WITH

© Martin Levenson

Alex Woolf

Alex has written more than 200 books on a wide range of subjects, including the Wall Street Crash. His The History of the World has sold over 100,000 copies.

The 'Roaring Twenties' in the USA was a decade of self-indulgence, parties, movie stars, ragtime and bright tomorrows. The growing pains of the New World and the gloom and despair of WWI were left behind. The US was finding its feet as the financial powerhouse of the world, the land of opportunity where everything was possible for anyone willing to grasp it. Everyone, it seems, wanted a slice of the cake. Gripped with the excitement of stocks and shares, ordinary Americans risked their hard-earned dollars. But whether stockbroker or man in the street, corporation or country, risk can lead to ruin...

What were the main causes of the crash? Could it have been avoided, or was it inevitable?

The 1929 Wall Street Crash was not the first case of financial mass hysteria to hit the US economy, and certainly wasn't the last. The 1920s was boom time in the USA. There was a spirit of optimism in the country and a willingness to take risks for financial reward. It became fashionable to play the stock market. People rushed to invest in the corporate giants of the modern world: General Motors, DuPont, Wright Aeronautical and Radio Corporation of America. As a result, share prices rocketed. When shares in the most popular companies became harder to come by, people began putting their money in investment trusts (ITs), today known as mutual funds, which held stock in hundreds of different companies. ITs were managed by financial experts and seemed to take a lot of the risk out of investing. The stampede to invest in ITs pushed share prices so high they soon represented a value far in excess of the total worth of their companies' assets.

This was now a 'mania' – a period when everyone, from wealthy financiers to common investors, lost touch with reality and seemed to believe that prices could keep rising forever. ITs performed extremely well on a rising market. But when the crash came, investors would discover they could perform just as spectacularly in reverse, shrinking to a fraction of their former value.

Was the crash avoidable? Probably not. Speculative manias, once they get going, gather their own momentum. Usually, the people with the power to end a mania are the ones most caught up in the frenzy.

Was there anything that made it unique from other economic disasters?

The Wall Street Crash was unique in its scale and in the number of people it ultimately affected. The crash occurred over three calamitous days of trading at the New York Stock Exchange on Wall Street: Thursday 24th, Monday 28th and Tuesday 29th (Black Tuesday) of October 1929, when huge numbers of people decided, collectively, it was time to sell.

With so many sellers, there were, of course, no buyers, and share prices plummeted. Various attempts by bankers

© Alamy

RIGHT
Roaring 20's America was a place of boom that led to bust

Images: Getty Images, Alamy

LYN DA
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PANIC
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FEAR 52 PERISHED IN LAKE MICHIGAN; FERRY IS MISSING
Wreckage Picked Up Indicates Craft Went Down With All Aboard.
EAG
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Grundy Agrees Rates Went Up Due to His Activities as Propagandist. Favors More Lobbying to 'Carry Out Voters' Wish.'
WARDER SOUGHT TO KEEP SEA TRIP SECRET, AID SAYS
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SILVER CERTIFICATE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
ONE SILVER DOLLAR
PAYABLE TO THE BEARER ON DEMAND
WASHINGTON, D.C.
SERIES OF 1923
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THE PAST

25 MARCH 1929

WARNING SIGNS

Following concerns by the US Federal Reserve about a frenzy of speculation and market trading, trading hit a bump in the road as investors sold off stock in rapid succession, causing a minor crash. For a time, productivity slowed across a number of sectors. There had been a good harvest of wheat, leading to a glut in the market, pushing prices down. Credit for the ordinary American had become easy to come by, and individual debt was on the rise. Despite this, signs were ignored, the market recovered and sleepwalked towards a fateful end.

24-28 OCTOBER 1929

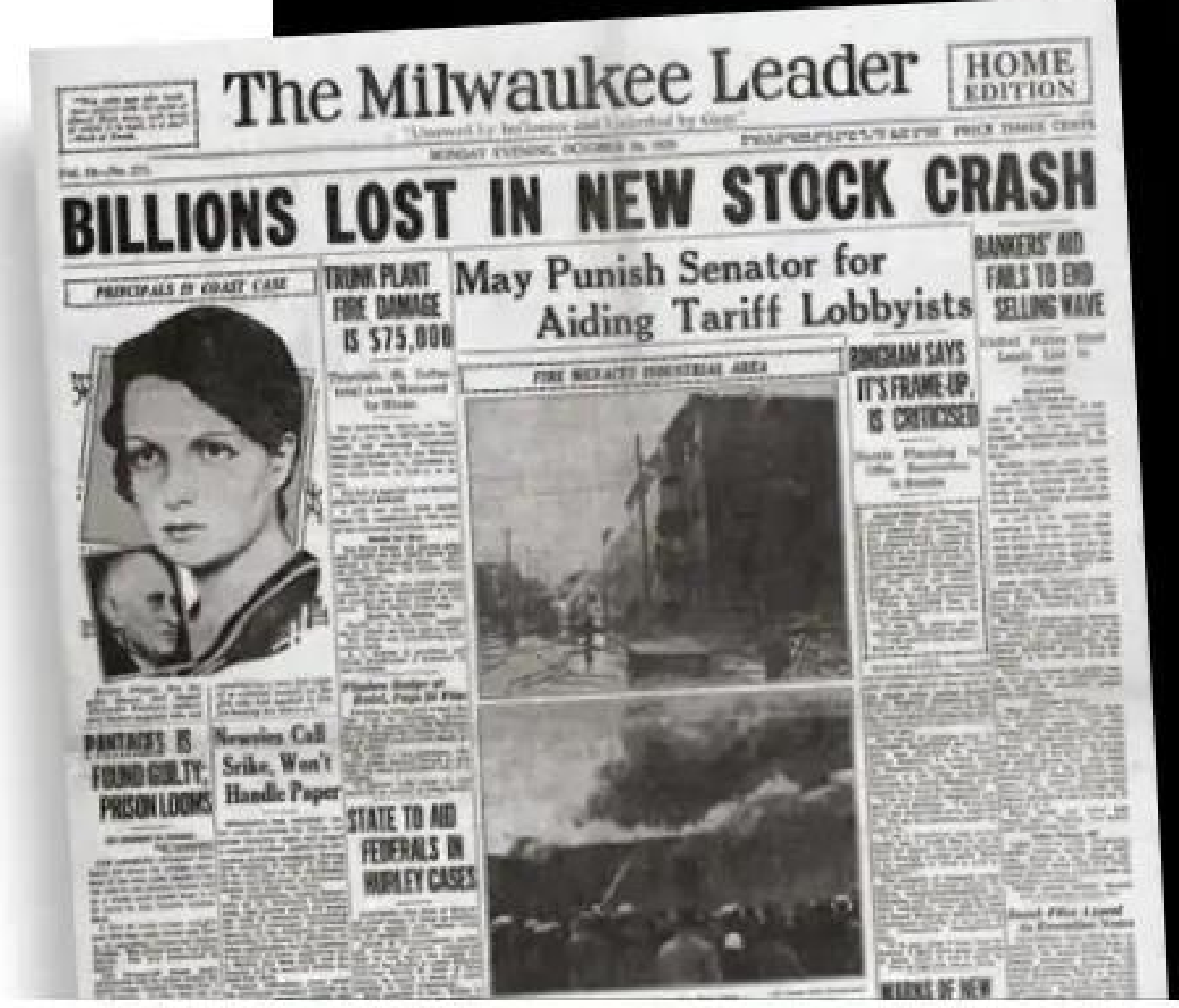
BLACK DAYS

In September 1929, British investor Charles Hatry was jailed for fraud, and his companies were suspended, reducing confidence in the markets and perhaps assisting the crash. On 24 October (Black Thursday), 11 per cent had been wiped off the price of stock almost immediately. Ticker tape communications were overwhelmed and too slow, leaving investors in the dark. A rescue package by major bankers was hastily put together, buying stock at inflated prices in order to try and stem the flow. It seemed to have worked, but by the 28th (Black Monday), more and more investors were pulling out, and the exodus of investment and decline in the markets continued.

29 OCTOBER 1929

BLACK TUESDAY AND BEYOND

This was the day that billions of dollars were wiped off the value of shares, with an estimated 16 million shares being traded in a single day. To add insult to injury, the following day saw many shares with no buyers at any price. The Dow Jones Index fell over 23 per cent in just these two days. Following some minor recovery, the market continued to fall. By 1932, the Dow Jones Index had declined by 89 per cent. It would be 1954 before the market would once again recover to achieve the highs of 1929.



The Milwaukee Leader HOME EDITION

BILLIONS LOST IN NEW STOCK CRASH

May Punish Senator for Aiding Tariff Lobbyists

TRUNK PLANT FIRE DAMAGE IS $75,000

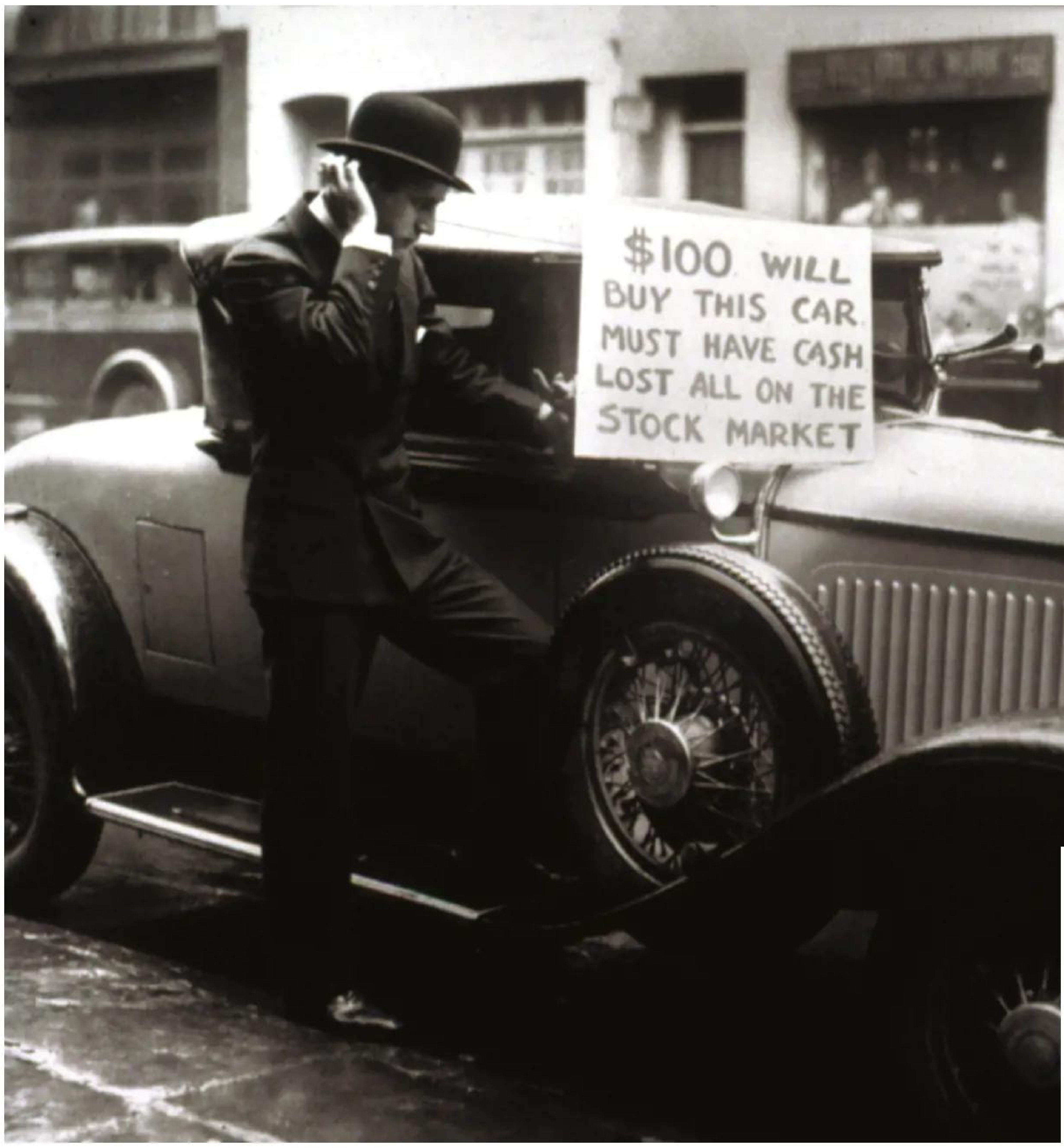
BANKERS' AID FAILS TO END SELLING WAVE

BINGHAM SAYS IT'S FRAME-UP, IS CRITICISED

PANTAGES IS FOUND GUILTY; PRISON LOOMS

Newsies Call Strike, Won't Handle Paper

STATE TO AID FEDERALS IN HOPLEY CASES


$100 WILL BUY THIS CAR MUST HAVE CASH LOST ALL ON THE STOCK MARKET

and business leaders to rally the market by buying shares failed. On Black Tuesday alone, over $14 billion was wiped off the value of the stock market - more money than the US had spent on WWI. And this was just the beginning. What made the Wall Street Crash worse than any other, before or since, was the way the market kept falling, week after week, month after month. By 1932, stocks had lost nearly 90 per cent of their pre-crash value.

Up to three million Americans were directly affected by the crash. Many were bankrupted, including the founder of General Motors, William Crapo Durant. Some took their own lives. An economic recession was certainly going to occur in 1930, with or without the crash, but the crash made it so much worse. With so many people having lost their savings, the consumer boom ended, and the United States slid into a depression that would last a decade.

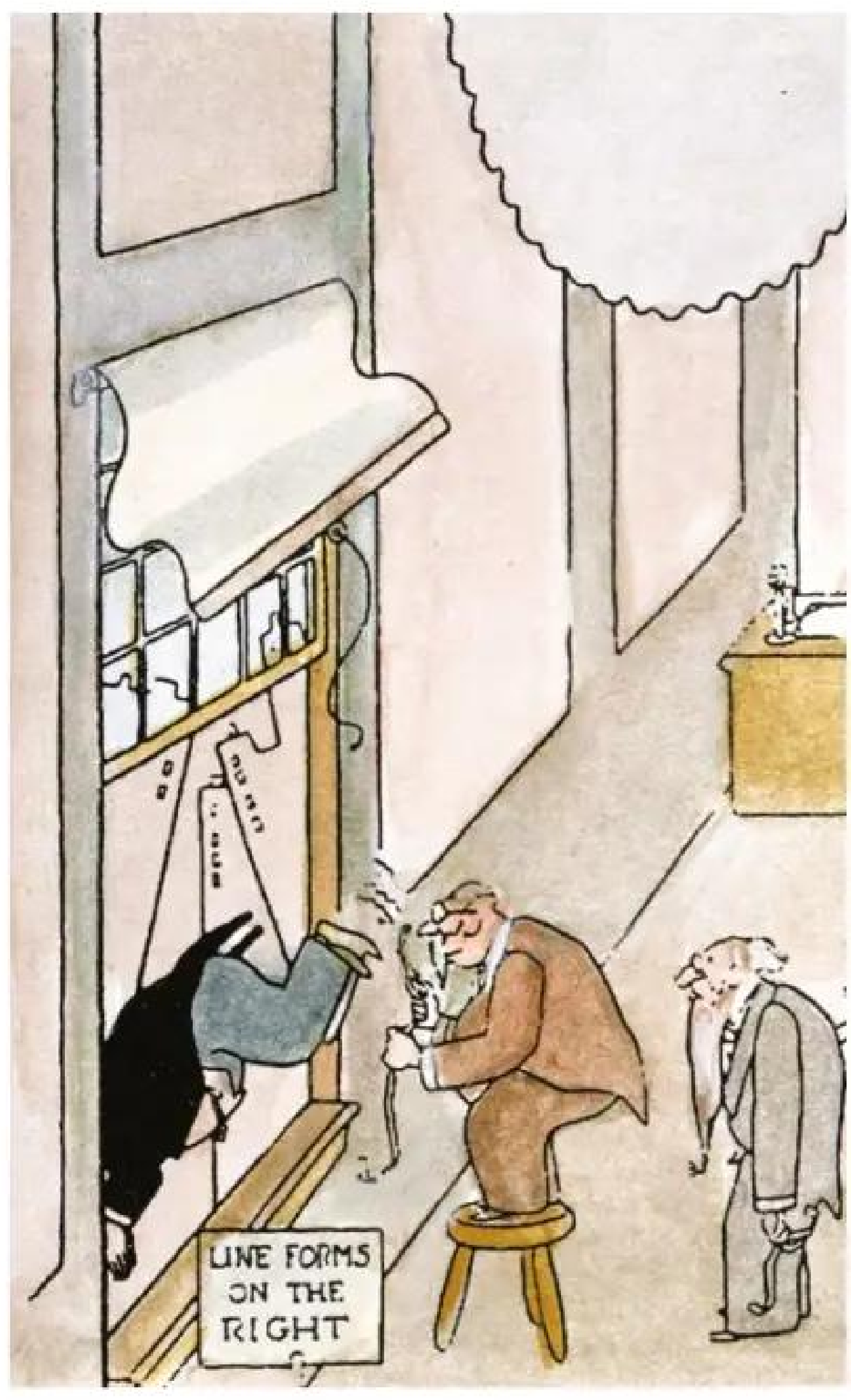
Were there any 'winners' in the crash, and if so, how?

There were very few winners from the crash, either reputationally or financially. Respected opinion in the autumn of 1929 was of the view that the economy was sound and prices would keep rising. Irving Fisher, professor of Economics at Yale University, declared on 15 October: "Stock prices have reached what looks like a permanently high plateau." One voice of warning came from economist Roger Babson, who in September predicted: "Sooner or later, a crash is coming." But he was mostly ignored.

Some canny investors made money out of the crash, including Jesse Lauriston Livermore, Albert H Wiggin and Irving Kahn. They did this by short-selling (borrowing shares of a stock, then selling them with the aim of buying them back cheaper later). Others, like Bernard Baruch, sold their stock before the crash. The winners generally kept very quiet as they saw the economic pain of the crash unfolding around the country and later around the world.

What were the effects of the crash on the world?

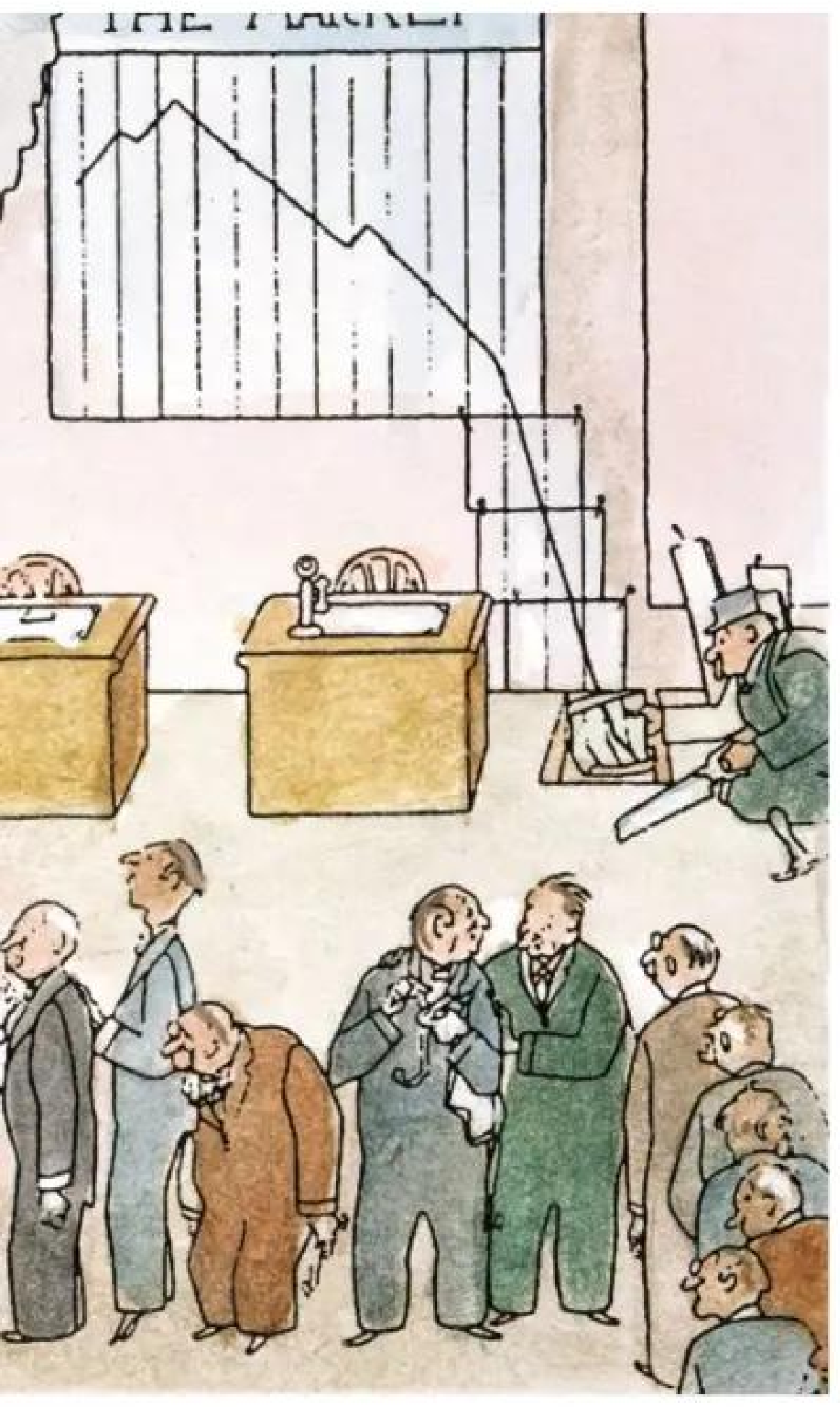
The ripples caused by the Wall Street Crash were felt all around the world. During the boom years of the 1920s, American banks loaned vast amounts of money to European countries to help stimulate their economies after


LINE FORMS ON THE RIGHT

LEFT
The financial collapse meant many investors lost everything

BELOW
A contemporary cartoon injected black humour into the disaster

BOTTOM
The crash would herald the Great Depression and immense hardship



the devastation of World War I. When American businesses began to fail after the crash, the United States was forced to call in these loans. This had disastrous consequences for European economies. To make matters worse, the USA raised import taxes to help its own industries by making goods from abroad more expensive. European governments retaliated with similar measures. The result was a drop in world trade and huge rises in unemployment.

Germany was the worst hit. It had relied on American loans to rebuild its economy after the First World War and to pay reparations to the victorious nations. As the depression hit, industrial production in Germany fell by almost half. By 1933, more than six million Germans – over a third of the workforce – were unemployed. The economic crisis led to social and political unrest and the rise of extremist movements. Communists predicted the end of capitalism. Fascists tried to channel people's anger into an aggressive nationalism, blaming 'foreigners' such as Jews for the economic woes. By 1932, Germany's Nazi Party had over a million members, and they were able to use the misery of mass unemployment to win support in general elections. In January 1933, they took power in Germany. The consequences for the world would be devastating.

What did the US and the world learn from the crash?
The administration of Franklin D Roosevelt introduced some important reforms. 'Market rigging' – the manipulation of share prices for personal profit – was outlawed. Reforms were made to the banking system, which had been weakened by the 1929 crash. A law was passed to safeguard those with small savings against losing all their money if the banks closed. This ensured banks did not speculate in their own stock, as they had done irresponsibly in 1929. In 1934, the Securities and Exchange Commission was established to police the stock market.

The crash put an end to the fashion for share trading. For nearly 30 years, nearly all but the wealthiest Americans stopped speculating on the stock market. But as the years went by, memories faded. New generations, unscarred by the crash, began to come into the market. There were further big crashes in 1987 and 2008, but this time, the authorities acted decisively to lend cash where needed, buy up stocks and ring-fence banks to protect depositors, preventing a depression.

What would the US have looked like socially, economically and politically if the crash had been averted?
There would have been no banking crisis, no large-scale bankruptcies and business closures. The world was certainly heading for an economic downturn in any case, but it would have been far milder. Herbert Hoover would probably have won a second term as president. The New Deal reforms of Roosevelt would not have been enacted, including the great public works projects of the 1930s and the beginnings of a welfare state. In other words, the USA would have continued with the same small-state, conservative, laissez-faire policies of the 1920s. The country would have been a lot wealthier as a whole, but the gap between rich and poor would have been a great deal wider.

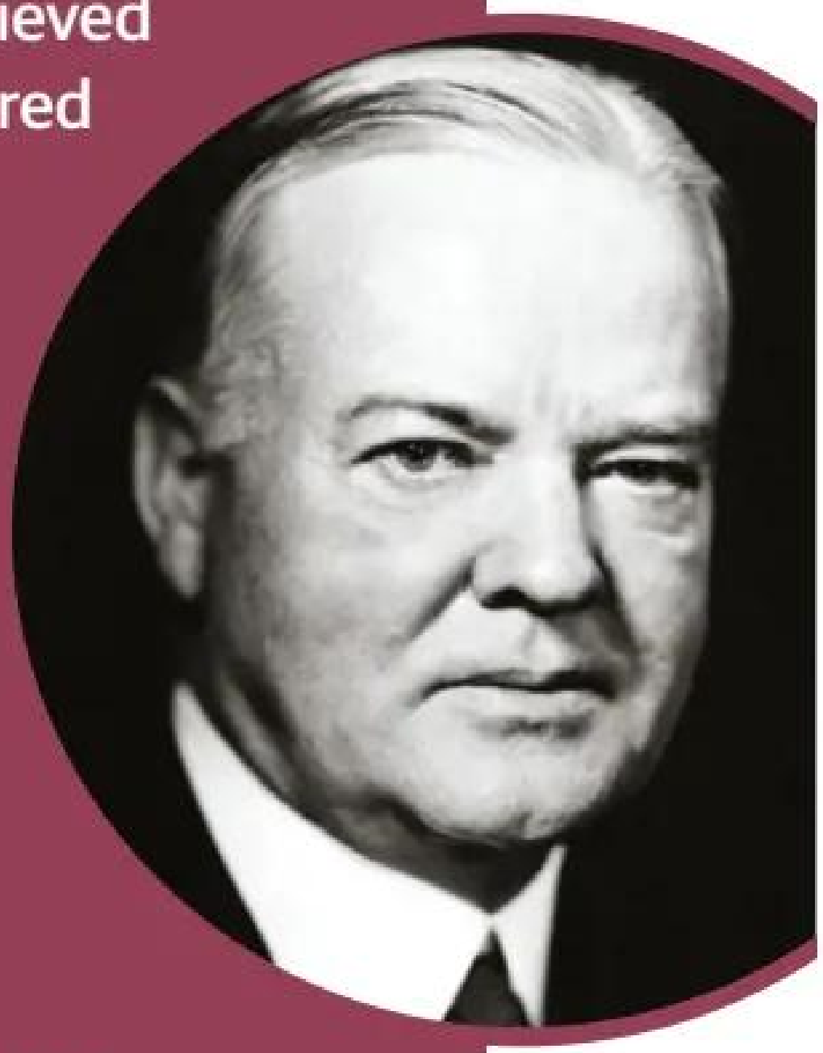
It's conceivable that WWII wouldn't have happened, with all its social impacts – for example, women and African Americans entering the workplace in big numbers and the huge rise in Mexican immigration to make up the shortfall of farmers. Without these developments, it's possible that the dramatic social changes of the 1960s, like the civil rights movement, women's liberation and the War on Poverty, would not have happened, or happened differently. The biggest legacy of the crash is probably the idea that the government should play an active role in addressing people's economic and social problems.

THE POSSIBILITY

1929 ONWARDS

SAME OLD COUNTRY

Without the Wall Street Crash, or one of lesser magnitude, there may not have been a wake-up call for America and the rest of the world. President Herbert Hoover would have been free to continue to pursue his policies of non-intervention by the government, leaving the free market to develop, but at the expense of the less well-off. Social reform would have been reduced to a snail's pace, especially if he had achieved a second term, with such blinkered thinking being so embedded that the protection of ordinary Americans, many of whom had suffered in the crash, would be set back decades.



1933

NO NAZI FOOTHOLD

Surviving on loans from America to rebuild after WWI, the crash was a disastrous economic tidal wave for Germany. The financial rug was well and truly pulled from beneath them. Economic and social chaos ensued, inflation spiralled out of control, and many Germans looked for something, or someone, to save them. Without such turmoil and confusion brought about by the crash, and continued stability to the national debt, it is possible that there would be no opportunity for the Nazis to exploit, no social despair and no route to power. With no Nazi Germany, world history would look very different.

1940s ONWARDS

IN A WORLD OF ITS OWN

With possible uninterrupted financial growth by the USA, Europe was still in decline as a major world player. With the possibility that there was no war in Europe from 1939-45, there would be no drain on the US economy. The Soviet Union, without the nationalistic focus of war and defence of its homeland, may well have isolated itself more in its own ideology. The growth of competition with the USA may well have been muted, unable to keep pace with American wealth to develop new technologies and scientific breakthroughs in weapons, and eventually, space. Only one superpower would dominate the world, financially and militarily.

All images © Alamy

What if...

THE CAMBRIDGE SPY RING WAS CAUGHT SOONER?

A Soviet spy cabal recruited at university wrought havoc on the UK for decades. But what if they were apprehended before the damage was done?

INTERVIEW WITH

Andrew Lownie

A graduate of Cambridge himself, Lownie is the author of *Stalin's Englishman: The Lives Of Guy Burgess* – which also served as the topic of his doctorate. Lownie's other books include, *John Buchan: The Presbyterian Cavalier* and *Traitor King: The Scandalous Exile of the Duke and Duchess of Windsor.*

Who were the Cambridge Five?

The Cambridge Five were five undergraduates recruited in Cambridge during the 1930s. They're normally regarded as Kim Philby, Donald Maclean, Guy Burgess, Anthony Blunt and John Cairncross, but this is a slight misnomer as there were many other students recruited by the Russians at Cambridge and other universities during the 1930s. The Russians called the group the Magnificent Five because they all knew each other and were very closely connected. Guy Burgess, for example, had affairs with both Donald Maclean and Anthony Blunt at Cambridge, a bit like the Bloomsbury set, which I think is why everyone is so interested in them. There was a sort of romantic or sexual connection as well as a more public one.

What information did they pass on?

They all passed on enormous amounts of information because they all had extremely important roles. Burgess worked for the BBC and put forward speakers who were sympathetic to the Soviet Union, like Anthony Blunt. Later, in the Far East Department, he helped shape British policy to recognise Red China. He then worked as a private secretary to the deputy foreign minister, where he basically saw everything, not least sensitive intelligence documents. He took stuff to the Russians, who photocopied them, and then Burgess returned them the next morning. We know that between 1941 to 1945, Burgess passed 4,604 documents to the Russians. The result was during the Four Power Conferences and post-war reconstruction of Europe, the Russians knew the British position often before the British negotiators knew themselves. This was crucial for things like the Berlin Airlift.

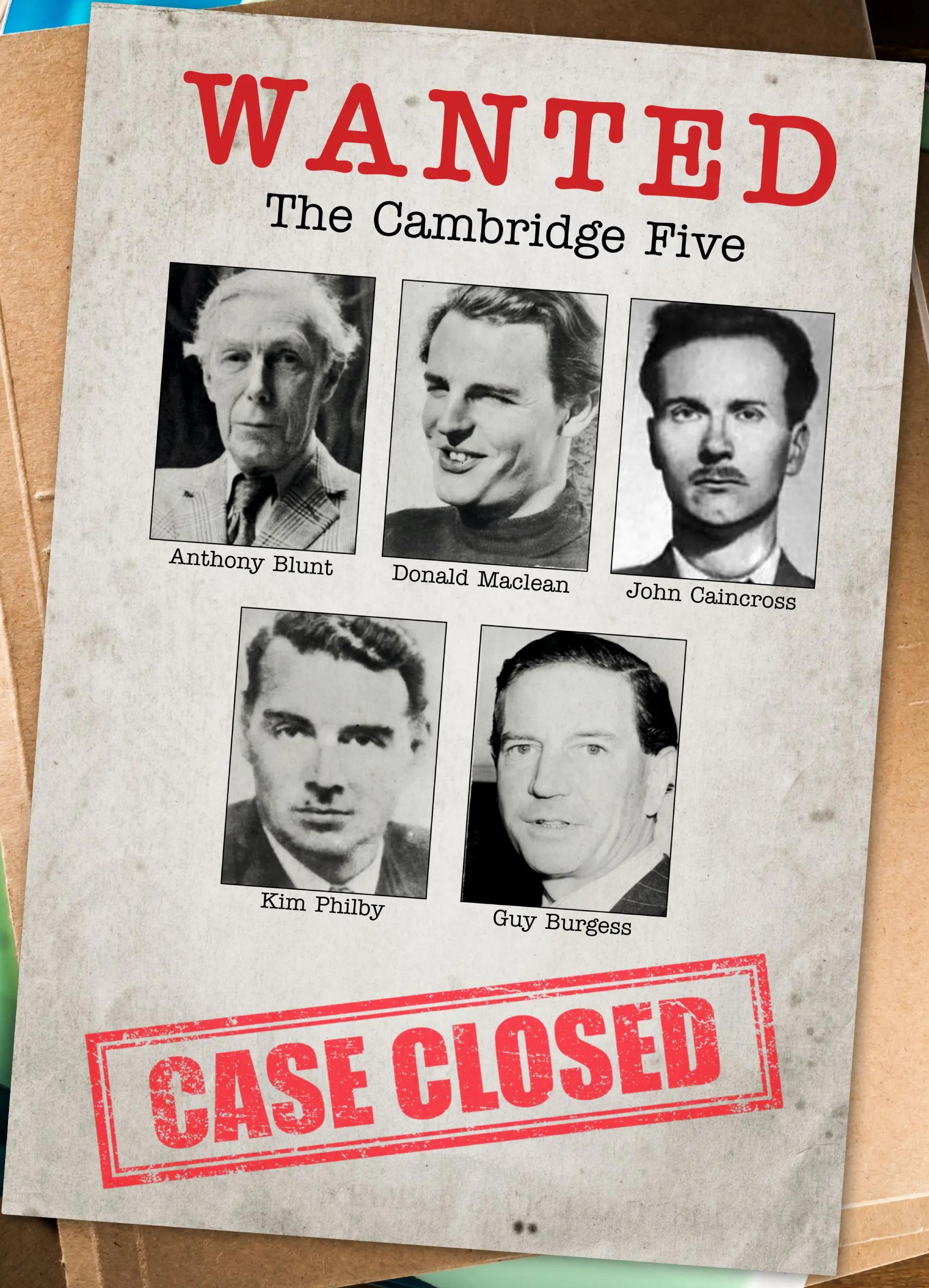
It's not just documents, either. Burgess would lend his flat for assignations, particularly to colleagues who were ostensibly married with children but who were homosexual. He gave this information to the Russians, who might then use it to blackmail them.

Then, there was Maclean, who was involved in atomic energy planning. A damage assessment for the US Joint Chiefs of Staff in October 1955 said that planning on atomic energy and US/UK post-war policy in Europe was all totally compromised. The view was taken that everything that crossed the spies' desks from the time they became active in 1935 to the time they were caught in 1951 was compromised.

This material was so important that people like Stalin, particularly during the war, thought the Cambridge Five were triple agents. Cairncross was at Bletchley, so he knew all about Enigma, and he was able to tell the Russians. Blunt was a very high official in MI5, and Philby was a career MI6 officer. The irony is that when the Americans discovered Maclean, the first

RIGHT John Cairncross, pictured in 1990

Interview by Jonathan O'Callaghan. Images: Getty Images


WANTED
The Cambridge Five
Anthony Blunt
Donald Maclean
John Caincross
Kim Philby
Guy Burgess
CASE CLOSED

person they spoke to about it was Philby, so he was able to tip off Maclean.

Why did it take so long for the fourth and fifth members to be exposed?
Well, they were, in fact, all suspected in 1951. If you look at the investigations (and the papers are now in the National Archive), Philby, Blunt and Cairncross were all questioned. MI6 were prepared to give Philby the benefit of the doubt, and he was allowed to work as a sort of freelancer until he fled in 1963, so he probably had access to secret information until then. Blunt was also suspected, but there was not enough evidence until another spy came forward in 1964. He was given immunity, until 1979 when Mrs Thatcher was forced to name him publicly. With Cairncross, again pretty much all the evidence was found in 1951, but he was allowed to pursue an academic career, first in America and then in Italy, and it was only espionage writers in the 1980s, who revealed his treachery.

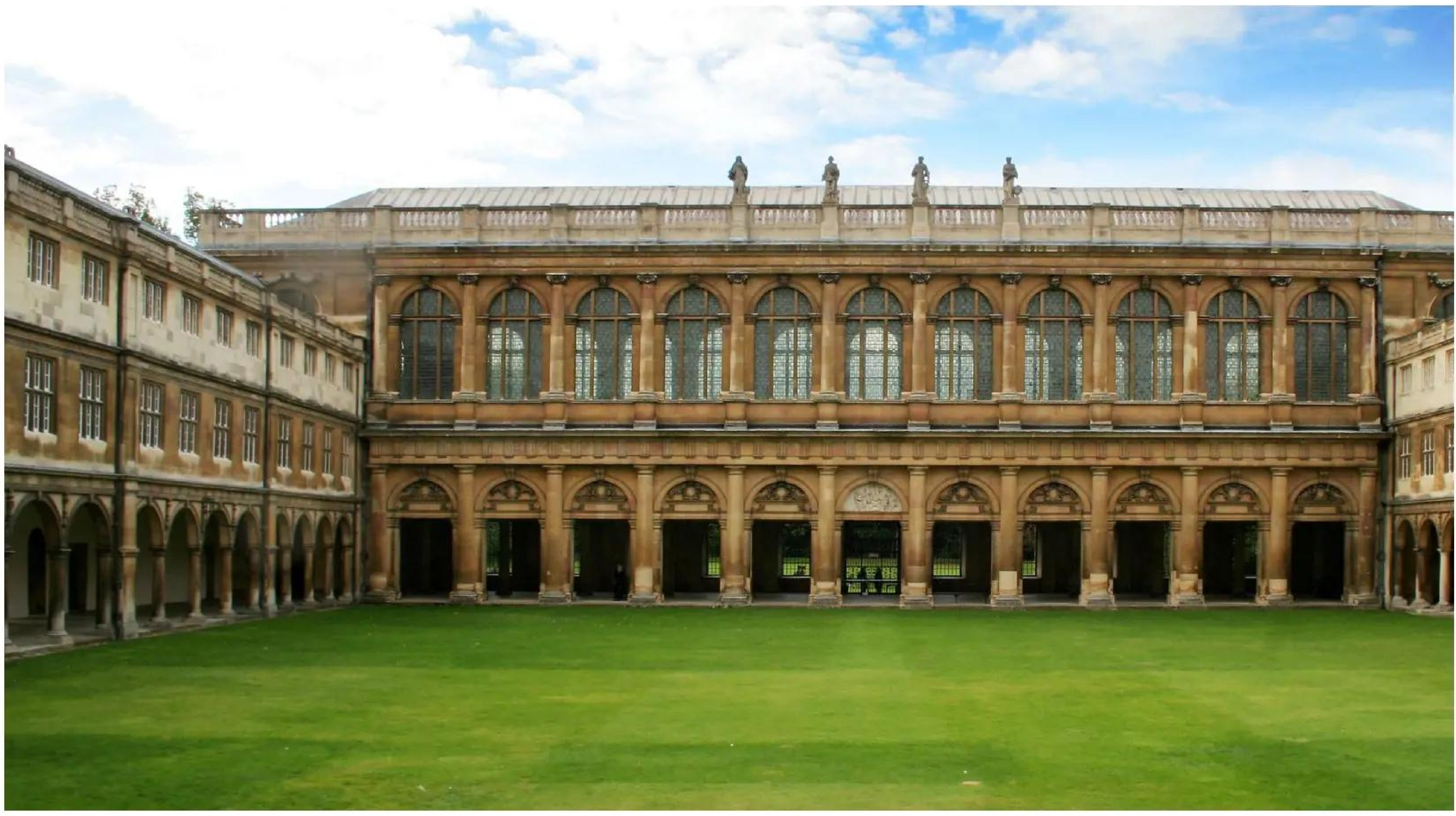
As Macmillan said, "When my gamekeeper shoots a fox I don't bring it into the drawing room, I bury it in the garden." And that was what they did.

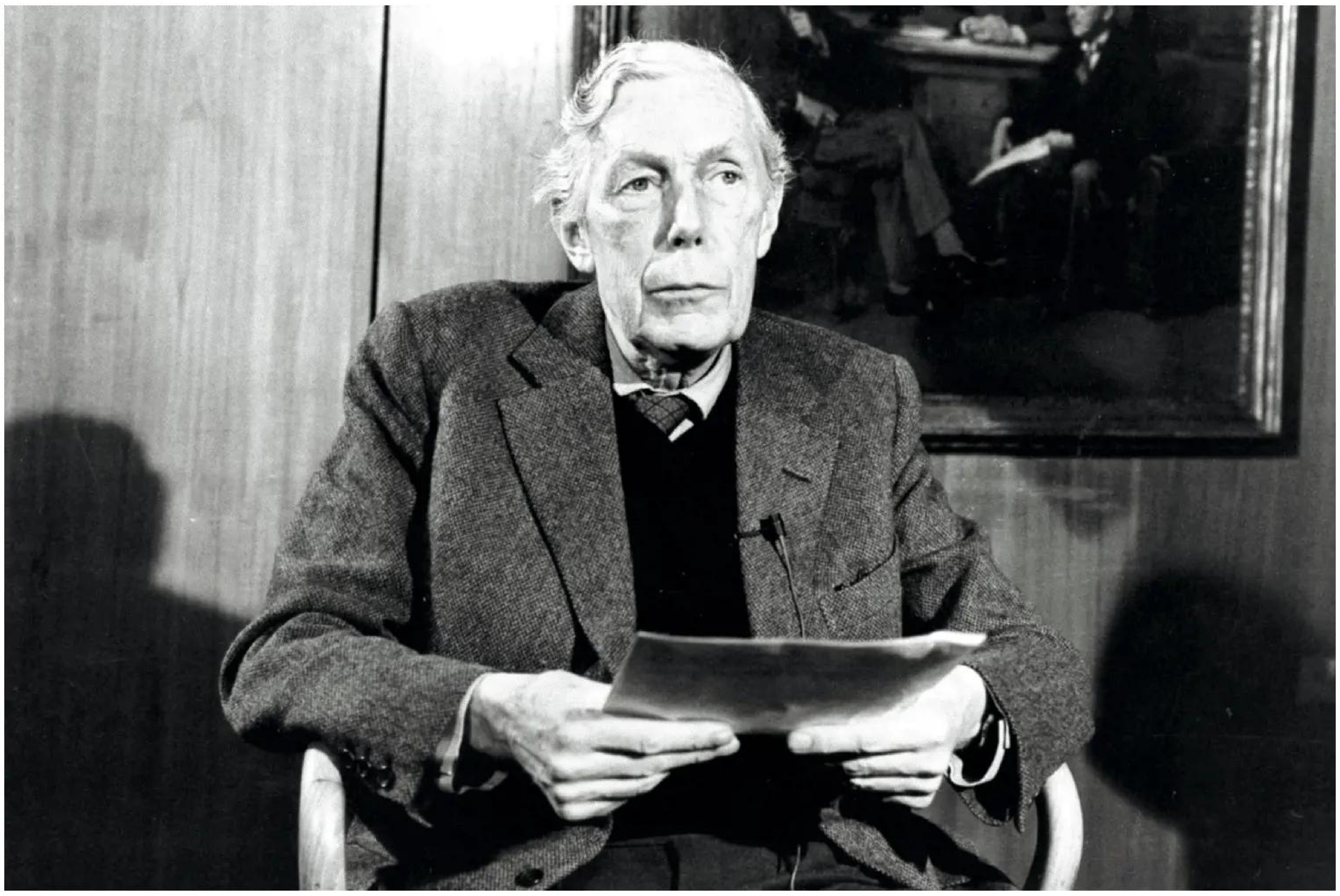
How much evidence is there that there were other members?
We have various bits of evidence. We know that after Philby was recruited in Vienna, he went back to Cambridge with a list of seven people he was targeted to recruit. Number one on the list was Donald Maclean and number seven was Guy Burgess. What we don't know are the numbers two to six, whether they were approached and turned him down or whether they were recruited. We also know that when the Russians recruited spies, they numbered them, and we know from the files that there's a big gap in the numbering between Maclean and Burgess, even though they were recruited only a few weeks apart.

Another bit of evidence is the broken Venona codes, which revealed spies called Professor, Poet and Chauffeur – we just don't know who they are. Finally, there were many people who were investigated who either partially confessed or there was no evidence and who were allowed to basically retire.

How close did each member come to being captured? Were there specific instances?
Yes, there were. Burgess liked to meet his Russian controller in the pub, and there was one instance when his suitcase filled with secret documents fell open. A kindly policeman, not realising how sensitive they were, helped put them back. Another time, Burgess and Blunt had documents in a suitcase and were stopped by the police. The police thought they were burglars, but when they didn't discover any tools for breaking into houses, they were let off.

How could the group have been prosecuted?
The interesting thing is that George Blake was prosecuted just a few years later and sent to prison, so there seemed to be two rules: one for people who went to public school and another for people who didn't. The ostensible reason was that they didn't have the evidence to bring a case under the Official Secrets Act and to do so, they would reveal they'd broken Soviet codes. But I think there wasn't the will there. There was a discussion at one point that Burgess could be prosecuted if he came





ABOVE
Anthony Blunt confessing during a television broadcast

> "Between 1941 to 1945 Burgess passed 4,604 secret documents to the Russians"

Images: Getty Images, Alamy, Wiki Commons

LEFT
Trinity College, where four of the five were recruited

RIGHT
Kim Philby during a press conference where he admitted he was guilty

back to Britain, but that was just a bluff as they wouldn't have been able to do it. It suited the government's purposes to have Burgess, Maclean and Philby in Moscow and for Blunt and Cairncross to have their immunity and keep quiet.

What was the effect of the Cambridge Five on British intelligence?
It was pretty devastating. They didn't know what was compromised, whether agents they had recruited had been betrayed and whether information was true. It subsequently led to witch hunts against intelligence officers. Indeed, a man called Guy Liddell probably would have been head of MI5, but because of his friendship with Burgess, he was sacked. Public respect for institutions of government was affected, too. The phrase 'The Establishment' was coined in a *Spectator* editorial in which they describe the white paper on Burgess and Maclean defection as the 'Whitewash Paper'. We feel we're distrustful of the government now [...], but one of the earliest things that shook faith in government institutions was this scandal.

What would have changed had they been caught earlier?
If they had been caught earlier, lots of things that were betrayed wouldn't have been betrayed, including agents and operations. There wouldn't have been the extent of demoralisation, there wouldn't have been the lack of cooperation, and intelligence would have operated far more effectively in terms of safeguarding British interests. It's impossible to say how things would have been different. The Soviets had an advantage not only in diplomatic negotiations but also in an assessment of our intelligence and military capabilities.

How would Anglo-American intelligence relations have changed?
There would have been greater cooperation, especially on nuclear intelligence matters. That relationship was restored, and I think it did continue in a modest way because we were joined to the Americans and their need, for example, for our bases abroad. But there was suspicion, particularly from the FBI, and there were a lot of turf wars between government agencies in America, as well as between America and Britain. It was embarrassing and damaging, but because a lot of the stuff remains secret, we don't know what was and wasn't shared, and it's difficult to do an audit as there are many variables we don't know about.

Would their capture have had any wider implications for the Cold War?
Yes, it would've stopped them giving away secrets – not least Burgess in the Far East Department, who was heavily involved in the Korean War. American lives might have been saved, and there might have been a different outcome. If they hadn't been caught when they were, Philby and Maclean might've gone to the top and done a lot more damage. Philby was touted as a future head of MI6, and he would only have retired in 1975 – many years after his treachery was discovered.

The Cambridge 50?

There is much to suggest that the Cambridge Five spy ring was just the tip of the iceberg, and the Soviet penetration of British intelligence was far deeper. More contemporary research suggests there was another ring at Oxford University, as well as attempts to recruit people at LSE, Imperial and Birmingham University. This was part of a Soviet plot to develop moles within a range of government institutions, which could then be activated later on and used for long-term information gathering. There were also a number of individuals who were investigated and either partially confessed or there was not enough evidence to convict. These included Michael Straight (part of the American ring), Alister Watson (an individual who worked within the Admiralty) and a senior civil servant called Dennis Proctor. "Just because we know about the ones that have been discovered doesn't mean that there were not lots of others," says Lownie.

The Soviets recruited spies at the heart of government

What if...

NEWLY ELECTED ROOSEVELT WAS ASSASSINATED?

Would the United States have delayed entering World War II if the president-elect was murdered?

INTERVIEW WITH

Professor Iwan Morgan

Iwan Morgan is professor of US Studies at the Institute of the Americas, University College London. He specialises in modern US political history, including FDR's presidency and the New Deal.

What was happening in the run-up to the attempted assassination of Roosevelt in 1933?

The inauguration of Roosevelt took place at a much later date than we were used to in the electoral calendar. He's elected in November 1932, but instead of taking office in the third week of January, he actually doesn't take office until early March. The period between the defeat of [incumbent President Herbert Hoover] and the inauguration of FDR is usually referred to as the interregnum. The problem is that FDR was elected largely on a negative note. There's a period of uncertainty during which the depression gets much, much worse. Unemployment begins to rise again. There's a banking panic beginning. And on the eve of Roosevelt's election, it looks as if the whole financial system is going down the drain. The New York Stock Exchange and the Chicago Stock Exchange closed their doors. Banks have closed their doors in all but a handful of states, and the United States is facing an economic crisis of a scale never seen before or since. Even taking into account the situation that greeted Barack Obama at his inauguration in 2009.

BELOW

FDR became the 32nd president of the United States in March 1933

What happens during the assassination attempt on 15 February?

Well, FDR is on a vacation. [He] wanted to get away from the incessant questioning about what he would do. He goes on this vacation aboard the yacht of a rich friend, and it pulls into Miami. He agrees to give a few words to the public gathered at this very large park in Miami. And unbeknownst to him and everybody of course, there is an Italian anarchist with a gun in his hand waiting for FDR to be driven close to him and to make an easy target.

It was very touch and go because this guy, [Giuseppe] Zangara, fires a total of six shots, two of which missed because somebody jostles his arm, two of which come quite close to FDR and one of which actually hit the mayor of Chicago, Anton Cermak. If the bullets had hit Roosevelt, he would not have survived, even if he hadn't been killed outright. What happens is a remarkable sense in the country that Roosevelt has been spared for a purpose, and he's very adept at playing this up, that he felt that there was a divine providence at work, and the country begins a sense that perhaps this man has been saved for the purpose of getting it out of the awful economic crisis.

Did the failed assassination actually help Roosevelt?

I think that it helped him in the sense that people now looked forward to the inauguration. The inauguration address was beamed into far more homes than ever before. And [there was], of course, Roosevelt's inspirational, uplifting rhetoric and the very famous line, "We have nothing to fear but fear itself." He doesn't actually say what he's going to do in the inaugural address. But he conveys a sense that he has it planned: that he's going to be dynamic, and he's not going to allow the depression to close in on the United States for much longer.

How would you summarise Roosevelt's four-term presidency from 1933 to 1945?

Well first, Roosevelt enlarges the federal government to become the key agency in dealing with societal and economic problems from his presidency onwards. From 1933 onwards, the federal government becomes a powerful and permanent presence in the lives of the American people, and Roosevelt's New Deal is responsible for that. The New Deal creates a welfare state. Secondly, he greatly enlarges the office of the presidency. From this point on, the presidency is the focal point for politics and government in the nation. Thirdly, because of what the New Deal did, because of the groups it helped, it creates a new Democratic party. Up until 1932, the party is largely dominated by white southerners with a small offshoot of urban machines in the northern cities. But thanks to the New Deal, by 1936, the Democrats have a majority coalition, and in addition to the white south, it now can rely on the support of labour, urban voters, ethnic voters, women, and African Americans. So, that New Deal Coalition of voters, or Roosevelt Coalition as it is sometimes called, keeps the Democrats the majority party in

Interview by Jonathan O'Callaghan. Images: Getty Images

EXTRA!

SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE

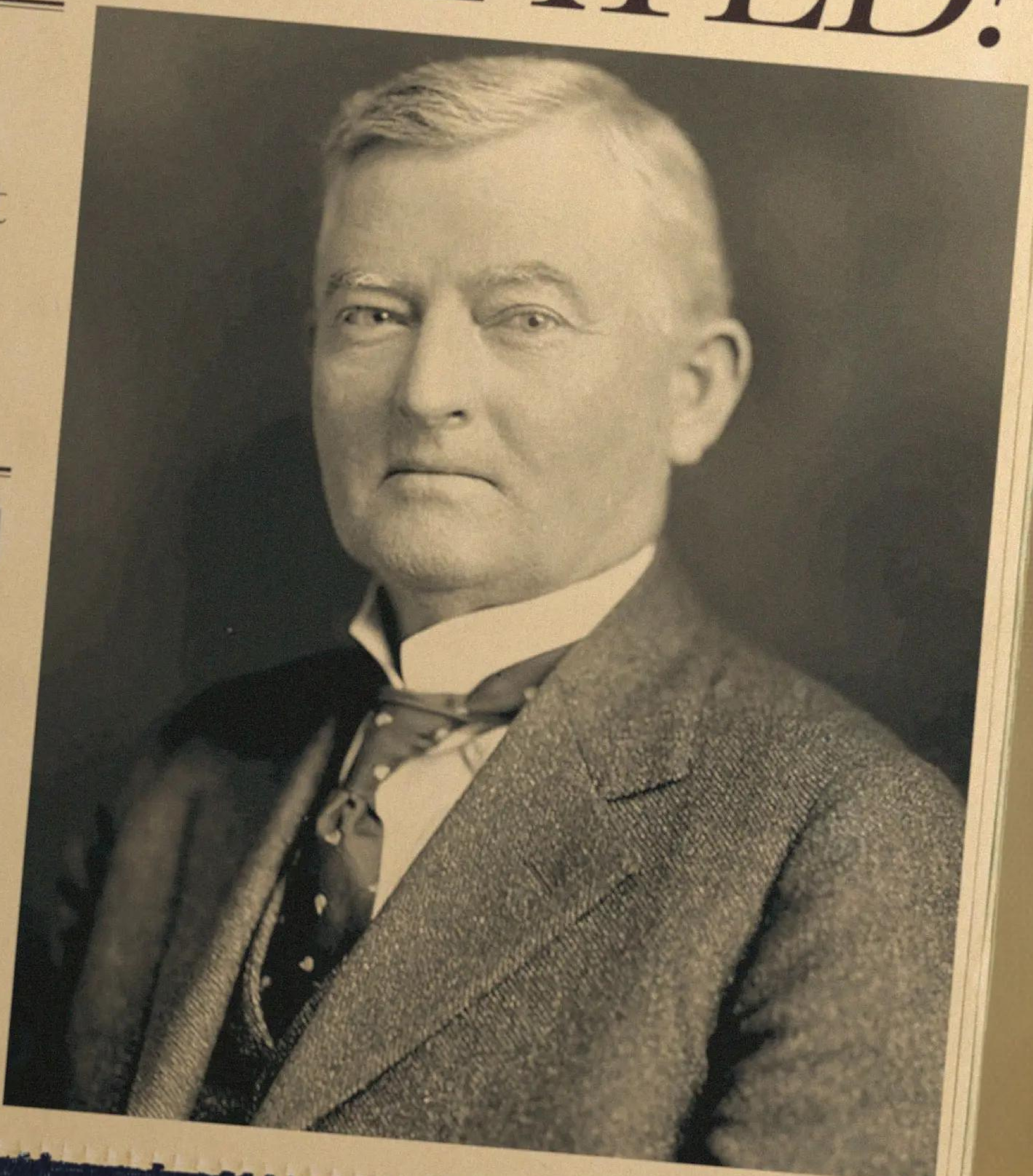
USA

Date 4th March

1933

JOHN GARNER IS INAUGURATED!

'Cactus Jack' becomes the 32nd President of the United States of America



SENTENCED!

ZANGARIS to be executed for the murder of Roosevelt

FLORIDA
24996

Zangaris to be executed on 20 March 1933 On February 15, 1933, Roosevelt was giving an impromptu speech at night from the back of an open car in the Bayfront Park area of Miami, Florida, where Zangara was armed with a .32-caliber US Revolver Company pistol-***cont pg4***

the United States in presidential elections until 1968. The collapse of the New Deal Coalition, really from the late 1960s to the early 1980s, is the making of the age of polarisation that we have today, where two highly competitive parties are struggling for ascendancy and becoming more extreme in their efforts to mobilise their bases as the key to electoral power.

ABOVE LEFT Anton Cermak is assisted after being wounded after the assassination attempt on FDR

ABOVE RIGHT President Roosevelt survived an assassination attempt in 1933

RIGHT America may have entered the war later had FDR been assassinated

What if FDR had been killed and never became president?

The first and most obvious consequence would have been that FDR's vice-presidential nominee, running mate John Nance Garner, would have become president. [FDR] cut a deal with Garner, who is a conservative Texan. Had he become president, Garner would have almost certainly focused on getting the agricultural sector of the economy up and running. This was the primary southern concern, and they were willing to use the powers of government to do that. But how much further Garner would have gone is questionable. He would almost certainly have taken action to prop up the banking system that was on the verge of collapse, and that would've been the second thing. He would've gone along with the banking policies and the farm recovery policies that FDR eventually pursued under the New Deal. But he would have been very reluctant to do much in support of industrial recovery, legitimisation of trade union rights, and significant expansion of relief provisions for the unemployed, which the New Deal made core to its goals.

> "Roosevelt has been spared for a purpose and he's very adept at playing this up"

Without Roosevelt, would we still have seen a New Deal?

I think, personally, that had Roosevelt been assassinated in Miami on that evening in February 1933, there would not have been the New Deal that we recognise today. There would have been a limited federal intervention in the economy that would have focused primarily on restoring the continence of the banking system, putting the agricultural economy to rights and some small amount of federal relief. There would've been nothing on the scale of the intervention of the New Deal.

How divided would America be without the Roosevelt Coalition?

We would have entered a period in which there would have been close competition between Republicans and Democrats. The Republicans would probably have reverted back to their anti-big government stance. The Democrats would have been a very modest big government party and I don't think there would have been the kind of electoral history that we saw.

Would America still have entered World War II in 1940?

I think without Roosevelt in the White House in the 1930s, it would have been

Images: Getty Images, Alamy

difficult for the United States to have moved, however slowly, toward an internationalist stance. In winning re-election in 1940 for an unprecedented third term, Roosevelt now has the legitimacy. He doesn't have to face the electorate again for four years, and he begins to move very quickly after that election to give aid to Britain. So I think we'd be talking about the different historical circumstances with regard to what the United States did in the Second World War. Sooner or later, of course, most people believe that the United States would have had to intervene because it could not tolerate a situation of total German domination of continental Europe and total Japanese domination of Pacific Asia. Things might have happened later, but the history of the period of 1939 to, say, 1942 would have been significantly different.

What else might have changed?

I don't think the presidency would have become such a strong institution in the way that it did. Up until the 1930s, there had only been a handful of strong presidents. Presidents tended to defer to Congress. And what we have under Roosevelt is the president emerging as a truly national leader exploiting the reality that it alone represents the nation and the United States, as opposed to these state and district representation of Congress. As problems become more national, the presidency rises. I'm sure a strong presidency would have eventually come into being, but it comes into being much earlier [with Roosevelt].

TOP
FDR's New Deal pulled America out of the Great Depression

ABOVE
The office of presidency may have had less power without FDR

Who was John Garner?

John Nance Garner III was the vice president to Franklin D Roosevelt for his first two terms in office. He had originally been a challenger to Roosevelt for the Democratic nomination in 1932 until he struck a deal to be VP that helped break the deadlock at that year's Democratic National Convention. Garner was originally from Texas and worked as a lawyer before becoming a county judge and working his way up the political ladder. He was only the second person to serve as both speaker of the house and vice president after Schuyler Colfax. In 1940, Garner challenged Roosevelt for the Democratic presidential nomination once again, only to lose again and see FDR head to the Oval Office for a historic third term. Garner was replaced in that election by Henry Wallace, a former Republican.

Despite retiring from public life in 1941, Garner remained a confidant of Democratic politicians in the years that followed

What if...

THE NAZIS HAD NEVER GAINED POWER?

During the interwar years, Germany faced numerous crises but it was defined by progressive leadership and Hitler's rise was not guaranteed

INTERVIEW WITH

Eric Weitz

Distinguished professor of History at The City College of New York. Eric Weitz is also the author of *Weimar Germany: Promise And Tragedy* as well as *Creating German Communism, 1890-1990: From Popular Protests To Socialist State.*

How was Germany run after Kaiser Wilhelm II was overthrown?

In the last weeks of [World War I], a revolution began with sailors in the port of Kiel, and it spread to industrial cities, then throughout the country. Throughout the winter of 1918, a revolution unfolds in Germany, and like all revolutions, it was very contested. On the radical end were workers, who established workers councils – soviets – in the factories, and this spread even to artistic realms, in theatres, and all through the country.

They were demanding a kind of radical democracy. Not really Bolshevik communism, but some kind of system in which workers would at least have influence over the economy. But the more moderate socialists, who were deathly afraid of 'Bolshevik chaos', as they called it, moved quickly to establish a parliamentary democracy.

The Social Democratic Party – the same party that we have today in Germany – in alliance with the liberal [German Democratic Party] and the Catholic Centre Party formed the Weimar Coalition. Their coalition prevailed at the election of January 1919, and then they empanelled a constitutional convention, which appointed a committee that met in Weimar because of the civil war raging in Berlin. They drafted a constitution in summer 1919, and on that basis, the Weimar Republic was created. This lasted until 30 January 1933, when Hitler was named chancellor.

What was life like in 1920s Berlin?

There was most definitely a lot going on. It was both tumultuous and crisis-ridden, but at the same time, it was one of the most creative eras of the 20th century. Perhaps there is a relationship between the two – we can never prove it – but the fragility of the political order, I think, contributed to the kind of artistic ferment that is still with us today. Particularly in the cities – Berlin, of course, was the centre – there was vital artistic experimentation going on.

Here, we have the creation of artistic modernism, expressionism in painting and theatre, very creative film, the new popular medium of the 1920s, and radio, also. Martin Heidegger's *Being And Time*, Thomas Mann's *Magic Mountain*, Bertolt Brecht and Kurt Weill's *The Threepenny Opera* – all of these incredibly innovative and creative works emerged in the [Weimar Republic].

There was a lively cabaret scene, again in the cities, a very lively public life with people out in the streets. They were having open discussions about sexuality.

I sometimes laugh to myself when people in the United States say discussing sexuality is so new when Germans were having them in the 1920s.

So it was very socially progressive?

Quite vibrantly so! There were discussions about homosexuality and pressures to reform Germany's restrictive abortion law. They also set up public health clinics that offered counselling about sex. The Weimar Constitution was probably the most democratic constitution anywhere in the world in the 1920s. Proportional representation, which ultimately contributed to the paralysis of the political system, was far more democratic than the American system of winner-takes-all. The security services sometimes responded brutally to public demonstrations, but, in general, there was a lively free press and freedom of assembly.

Jewish life also flourished – another sign of openness. There was still prejudice, and

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RIGHT
In the wake of the 1918-19 German Revolution, political factions vied for power

> "Jewish life also flourished - another sign of openness"

areas like the Officer Corps were closed off to Jews. However, it was possible for Jews to get university professorships.

How did right-wing groups such as the Nazi Party gain ground?
In the early 1920s, you have literally hundreds of extreme right-wing organisations. Many of them were very small and local but troublesome. These right-wing groups were, by and large, demobilised soldiers, let go under the armistice conditions and the final Versailles Peace Treaty.

These demobilised soldiers were aghast at the prevalence of socialists and communists in public spaces and leading government – as well as Jews in high-level positions. In 1919, the Jewish social democratic chancellor of Bavaria, Kurt Eisner, was assassinated. In 1922, the Jewish banker and intellectual Foreign Minister Walter Rathenau was killed. So there was a lot of right-wing terrorism going on, carried out by these small groups. The Nazis eventually unified these groups under the Nazi Party – that was one of their first accomplishments. In 1923, when hyperinflation completely disrupted economic and social life, these right-wing groups grew in size, and the Nazis made their first attempt to seize power [in the failed Munich Beer Hall Putsch].

So after the hyperinflation in 1923, was the Nazi Party's rise inevitable?
Actually, between 1924-29, the so-called 'golden years' of the Weimar Republic, there was a move back to the political centre. You see it in the elections of 1928 when both the extreme right and extreme left lose significant support. The Nazis in 1928 are a small party, they're a police problem, but they're not really a political threat. Hitler has been banned from speaking in many of the German states. They're really nowhere until 1929 when the Great Depression hits, and that then gives wind – I mean a thunderstorm, a hurricane force of wind – to the Nazi sails. But even in the 1930 elections, the Nazis got slaughtered with only 18 per cent of the vote. It was a shock. The highest vote they would get in the popular election was 37.4 per cent in July 1932. Now, that's a large chunk, to be sure, but it's not a majority, and that's significant because they never had a majority. You know, before the Third Reich, they never had a majority of popular support.

If the Nazis were polling so badly, how did Hitler become Chancellor of Germany in 1933?
There is a popular understanding that the German people let Hitler into power, but that's absolutely wrong. So all through 1932, whilst the economy keeps falling, the political system has completely fragmented. There are three major elections in the course of 1932, two parliamentary elections and one presidential election. The biggest electoral turnout the Nazi Party gets is 37.4 per cent. In November 1932, they lose again, and this time, are down to 32 per cent. There is discontent within the Nazi Party about Hitler's leadership, and I think

HOW WOULD IT BE DIFFERENT?

REAL TIMELINE

Kaiser Wilhelm II abdicates
Following the Kiel Mutiny, a revolution spreads through Germany. Kaiser Wilhelm II is forced to abdicate and the Weimar Republic emerges.
9 November 1918

The Great Depression
Reliant on American loans under the Dawes Plan, the Wall Street Crash has a devastating effect on Germany. Politicians struggle to find a meaningful solution.
29 October 1929

Political chaos
Three governments collapse in Germany in 1932, with Chancellor Brüning resigning, Franz von Papen failing to win votes and Schleicher's regime lasting two months.
1932

Hitler appointed Chancellor
On the advice of Franz von Papen and several colleagues, President Hindenburg abandons his opposition to Adolf Hitler and appoints him as the new Chancellor of Germany.
30 January 1933

Hitler given new powers
The German parliament – controlled by a Nazi coalition with other right-wing parties – votes to make itself redundant, passing the Enabling Act, allowing Hitler to rule by decree alone.
23 March 1933

ALTERNATE TIMELINE

The Nazi Party collapses
Though the Nazis were the largest party in the fractured parliament, they still only had 33 per cent of the vote. Dissatisfied with Hitler's leadership, an attempted coup leads to a schism and ultimately the dissolution of the party.
1933

Chancellor Papen returns
With Hitler no longer a tenable option for chancellor and limited alternatives, President Hindenburg appoints his old friend Franz von Papen to the post once again.
30 January 1933

it is possible to imagine the dissolution of the party.

However, in the end, in January 1933, a group of alpha men, bankers, army officers, and high public servants – including Franz von Papen, Kurt von Schleicher and the president's own son, Oskar von Hindenburg – prevail upon Hindenburg to name Hitler chancellor. So in the very end, it's a small group of powerful men around the president who are responsible for the Nazis coming to power.

Why did these figures want to help Hitler?

Their motives were to destroy the republic and replace it with some kind of conservative authoritarian system and to overthrow the Versailles Peace Treaty so that Germany could become a great power again. Basically, you have a coalition of interests between older, more traditional conservatives and the Nazis. Each side is using the other, but the conservatives find that they cannot actually contain the Nazis. Not at all.

If the Nazis had dissolved, or Hindenburg had maintained his opposition to Hitler, could the Weimar Republic have survived?

The optimistic assessment would be that the Weimar coalition parties would gradually win more support, people would come back to the centre, and you would have a viable social democratic parliamentary government, as we were getting in Sweden in the same period in the 1930s.

But when the Great Depression comes, it hit Germany so fast, and it affects them more than any other place. At the same time, the Social Democrats were exhausted, and the political system fragments and becomes unworkable. Even before the Nazis seize power, the president signed emergency orders to issue budgets, to pursue his deflationary policy that only worsened the economy.

In either scenario, without Hitler, was World War II still inevitable?

I think World War II was inevitable when the Nazis came to power, but I don't think it would have been with a conservative group in power. It would have still been a nasty military dictatorship, probably, but they would have been far more cautious. We know that because the conservatives thought Hitler was too radical with his moves into the Rhineland in 1936 and Czechoslovakia in 1938 – they're much more cautious and don't support those measures.

OPPOSITE
The Weimar Republic's vibrant nightlife inspired the movie *Cabaret*

ABOVE
Money became worthless during Germany's 1923 hyperinflation crisis

LEFT
Hitler united Germany's various far-right groups under a single banner

Night of the Long Knives
In a bloody purge of the SA leadership and Hitler's political rivals, Papen narrowly escapes with his life.
30 June 1934

Nuremberg Laws
Hitler announces new measures that establish apartheid in Germany, with Jews losing their civil rights and becoming second-class citizens.
15 September 1935

Reoccupying the Rhineland
Hitler marches 20,000 German troops into the Rhineland, directly contravening the Treaty of Versailles.
7 March 1936

Buchenwald opens
SS authorities open the Buchenwald concentration camp. The following year, almost 10,000 Jews are sent here.
16 July 1937

Kristallnacht pogrom
Joseph Goebbels leads an attack against German and Austrian Jews, which is called the 'Night of the Broken Glass' after the devastation it causes, including piles of smashed shop windows.
9 November 1938

World War II declared
Following the invasion of Poland two days before, and Hitler's refusal to withdraw, Britain and France declare war on Nazi Germany.
3 September 1939

Reichstag Fire
When Van der Lubbe is charged with burning down the Reichstag building, Papen seizes on this opportunity, arresting communist leaders.
27 February 1933

Election victory
With widespread anti-communist feeling and votes from former Nazi supporters, Papen's Centre Party wins at a general election.
5 March 1933

Authoritarian democracy
With a mandate to govern, Papen passes ultra-conservative laws and perhaps even seeks to reform the constitution.
1934

Military dictatorship
Advocating the seizure of power as early as November 1932, Papen exploits Hindenburg's death to combine the chancellorship and presidency.
2 August 1934

Renegotiate Versailles
While Papen would not risk starting a war, he would strengthen the military to force Britain and France back to the negotiating table.
1936

Peace for our time?
War-weary Britain and France allow Germany to annex Czechoslovakia in return for Papen de-escalating his military build up.
1938

© Alamy, Getty Images

What if...

EDWARD VIII HELD ONTO THE THRONE?

How the reign of the 'playboy' king would have tackled a constitutional crisis, and beyond

INTERVIEW WITH

Professor Richard Toye

Professor Toye is Head of History at the University of Exeter. His research includes Britain from the late 19th century to the present day, with a focus on its political and economic history.

What were the circumstances leading up to Edward becoming the king?

Up until he became Edward VIII in 1936, he was the Prince of Wales and was, of course, the son of George V, with whom he had a rather difficult relationship. His father was someone who was very traditional and had a very strict idea about the role of royal duty. By contrast, Edward was really a bit of a playboy who had various affairs with a number of women and who liked socialising and drinking, and really not being the, frankly, kind of unexciting but dutiful monarch like George. In some ways, he was somebody who looked, on the surface, as though he might be a very modern kind of dynamic monarch, which could excite people in the age of the mass media, and yet this didn't really work out because, at the end of the day, he wasn't prepared to put his royal duties before his own personal interests.

After George V died in 1936, what was Edward's short reign as king like starting on 20 January 1936?

Well, there was the famous moment where he went to South Wales, which, of course, was at a time of considerable economic distress, and he saw the conditions people were experiencing with unemployment and so on, and he made what might seem a rather bland remark of "something must be done". This was kind of venturing into overstepping his realm and venturing into the realm of politics. So, for those who wanted to champion him or later viewed him as a dynamic, caring monarch who had been done in by the establishment, this was one of the pieces of evidence that they used, the idea that he was some kind of radical social reformer. He obviously didn't really have a substantial [understanding of] the existing order of things but it kind of helped create the narrative that he was pushed aside by the conservative establishment.

Why did Edward VIII abdicate after just 326 days as monarch?

Well, there are two different parts of the story, really. The first is that he wished to marry an American woman, Wallis Simpson, who was twice divorced. And this was a bridge too far for the government and, indeed, probably for quite a lot of people in the country. So, I think, at one level, it was simply that he wanted to marry somebody who didn't really fit in with the expected or established norms of who a king should marry, but ultimately it was that he declined to take the advice of his ministers. And the king's constitutional position means that he has to do that, including in what might seem like purely personal affairs like marriage, because this is something that can potentially affect the future of the state. So, it was partly his genuine obsession with Wallis Simpson but also his refusal to give up that obsession and follow the advice of his ministers. He couldn't really stay as king and reject that advice, and so chose to step down.

Is there a scenario where he could he have continued as king?

Had he decided, 'Well, yes, I'm going to definitively give up this relationship and ambition to marry Wallis Simpson,' then

RIGHT
Churchill was initially a supporter of Edward

Interview by Jonathan O'Callaghan. Images: Getty Images

"He was certainly somebody who got a lot closer to the Nazis than anybody really ought to have felt comfortable being"

yes, he could have stayed king, and nobody could force him to abdicate. But probably, I think there was a collective sigh of relief from the government when he did abdicate. That's not to say that there was a plot to get rid of him, but George VI, who followed him, was somebody who was much more cognisant of the perceived duties and responsibilities of the monarch and did not cause the government any difficulties at all. Had Edward continued, then some other such incident or crisis could well have occurred again.

How might things have been different under Edward VIII than George VI?

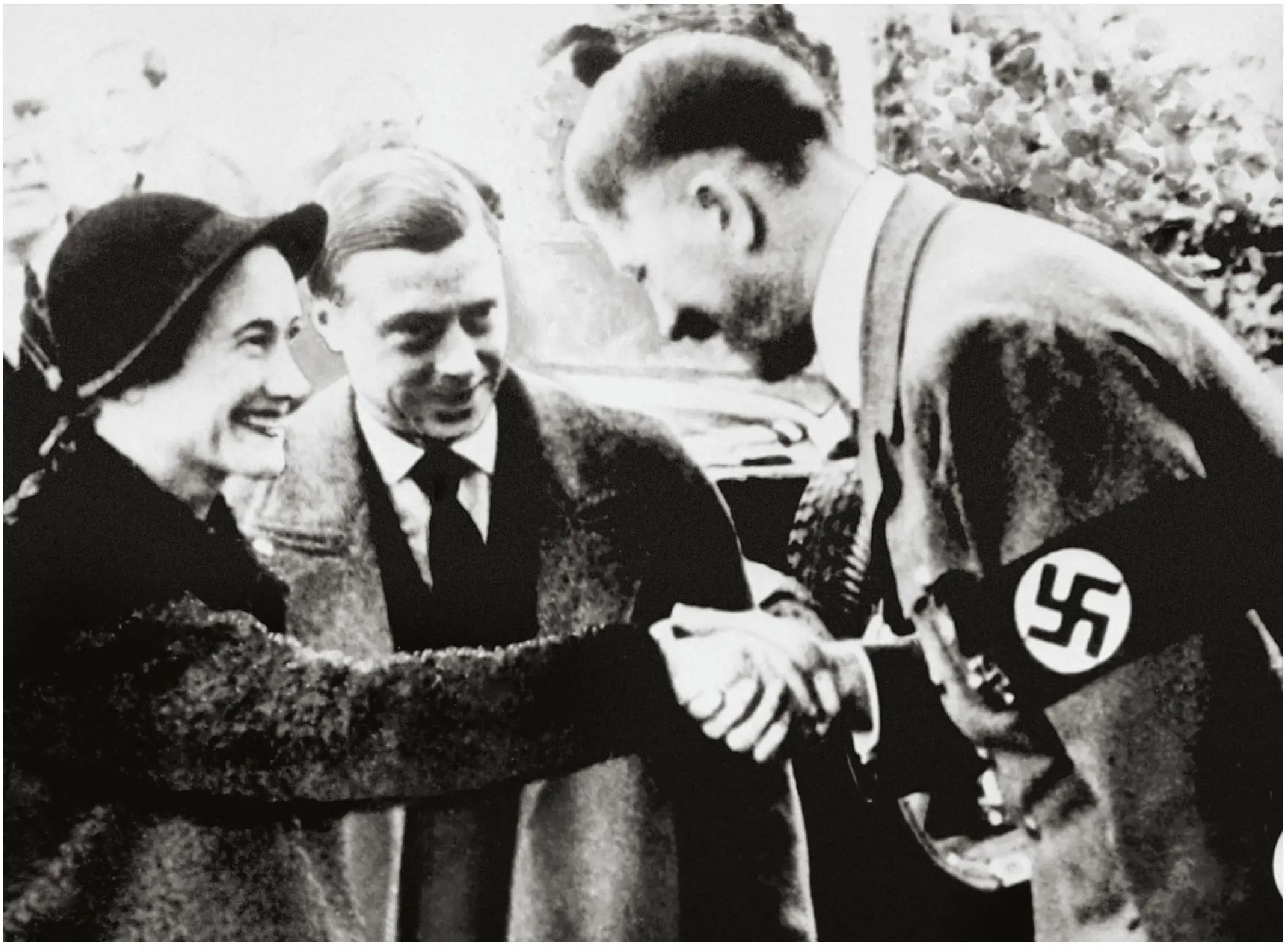
Edward was quite a lazy person who didn't really enjoy reading official papers or turning up and doing the standard ribbon-cutting ceremonies. He made his boredom fairly obvious on some occasions. By contrast, George was somebody who was dutiful and famously had a speech impediment, which made it a challenge for him to broadcast. George fitted more naturally into the expectations of the role, in spite of the fact that he wasn't necessarily going to be as popular a figure because he was dramatically less charismatic.

Is it true Edward was a Nazi sympathiser, having toured Germany and met Hitler in 1937?

There's scope for arguing about it. You can see him in pictures kind of giving the Nazi salute, which of course, was a common greeting that everybody did in Germany, and he's hardly the only person to have toured Germany, but I think that his basic enthusiasm is pretty clear. He wasn't exactly an ideologue or somebody who thought about politics terribly hard, but he was certainly somebody who got a lot closer to the Nazis than anybody really ought to have felt comfortable being. And then there is the question of was he, in 1940, contemplating somehow coming back and being restored to the throne by the Germans. Now, the evidence all gets very murky and ambiguous, and therefore, I don't think that you can definitively say that he was doing that, but there are enough questions in the archival record to make you wonder about it. And, of course, Churchill sent him off as far away as he decently could, to be Governor

BELOW
Edward is seen here meeting Adolf Hitler in 1937

RIGHT
Edward may have set the tone for a more progressive monarchy



Images: Getty Images, Alamy, Wiki Commons

of the Bahamas [in 1940], to really get him out of the way.

Would Edward have been a threat to Churchill, including his calls for peace with Germany?

I don't think he really posed any threat to Churchill's position, but he was somebody who rather liked Neville Chamberlain, as a lot of people did, and was sceptical towards this new figure bouncing in and trying to do things in a rather unconventional way. Would he have been somebody, who in some way, made more difficulties in 1940? Would he have been for or against Churchill at that point? What would his attitude be, the idea of a compromise peace [with Germany], for example? You could say that his interest in touring Nazi Germany and fascist sympathies were, to some degree, partly at least a product of the fact that he'd abdicated, so you might think his ideas might not have evolved in the same way had he remained king.

Could we have seen a different political leadership heading into the war if he refused to abdicate and caused parliament to dissolve?

If he refused to abdicate, that would be a very difficult situation because he could only marry with the government's permission. I suppose he could have stayed on and somehow tried to get his case out to the country and created a genuinely larger constitutional crisis. The national government was notionally a coalition, but it was very heavily dominated by Conservatives, who had won a big majority in the 1935 general election, and the Labour Party only had 135 seats. Pretty much all significant MPs agreed about the king's position. There was a small group who might have formed the basis of a so-called King's Party, including Churchill, but would they have really stood a chance at a general election? I think not. So if a general election had somehow come about, I rather suspect that [Stanley] Baldwin would have won it again [in 1935], and he would have ended up in a not totally dissimilar situation to the one that you did have with him then retiring in 1937 and Neville Chamberlain taking over.

Could he have been a successful king?

I suppose there was a way in which he could have made a success of being king. He could have got over himself and decided to do his duty, but do it in a more inspiring way than perhaps George did. In some ways, he can be seen as the precursor of the modern monarchy, which people see as unconventional. He was a precursor of some of the tensions which developed in the post-war monarchy.

Divorce and the line of succession

Dating back to Henry VIII and his attempts to annul his marriage to Catherine of Aragon, leading to England breaking with the Catholic Church in 1534, the monarch has been the defender of the faith as the head of the church in England. For the longest time, the Church of England allowed divorce but frowned upon remarrying while a former spouse was still alive, and as the head of the church, this was an important principle to uphold for the king or queen. And since the sitting monarch needed to approve marriages for anyone in the line of succession, it essentially held for all members of the royal family, too. That is until 2002 when the Church of England changed its rules and started recognising marriages of divorced persons 'under special circumstances'. It is thanks to this rule change that Prince Harry and Meghan Markle were allowed to marry in 2018.

The difficult relationship between the British royal family and divorce dates back to Henry VIII

What if...

REPUBLICANS WON THE SPANISH CIVIL WAR?

A Republic victory for Spain was a tall order without British and French aid, but without Franco, Spain would be spared a fascist dictatorship

INTERVIEW WITH

Paul Preston

Sir Paul Preston is Professor of International History at the London School of Economics and specialises in 20th century Spain. Among his many books are *Franco: A Biography* (1993); *The Spanish Civil War: Reaction, Revolution, Revenge* (2006); *The Spanish Holocaust: Inquisition And Extermination In Twentieth-Century Spain* (2012) and *Architects of Terror: Paranoia, Conspiracy and Anti-Semitism in Franco's Spain* (2023).

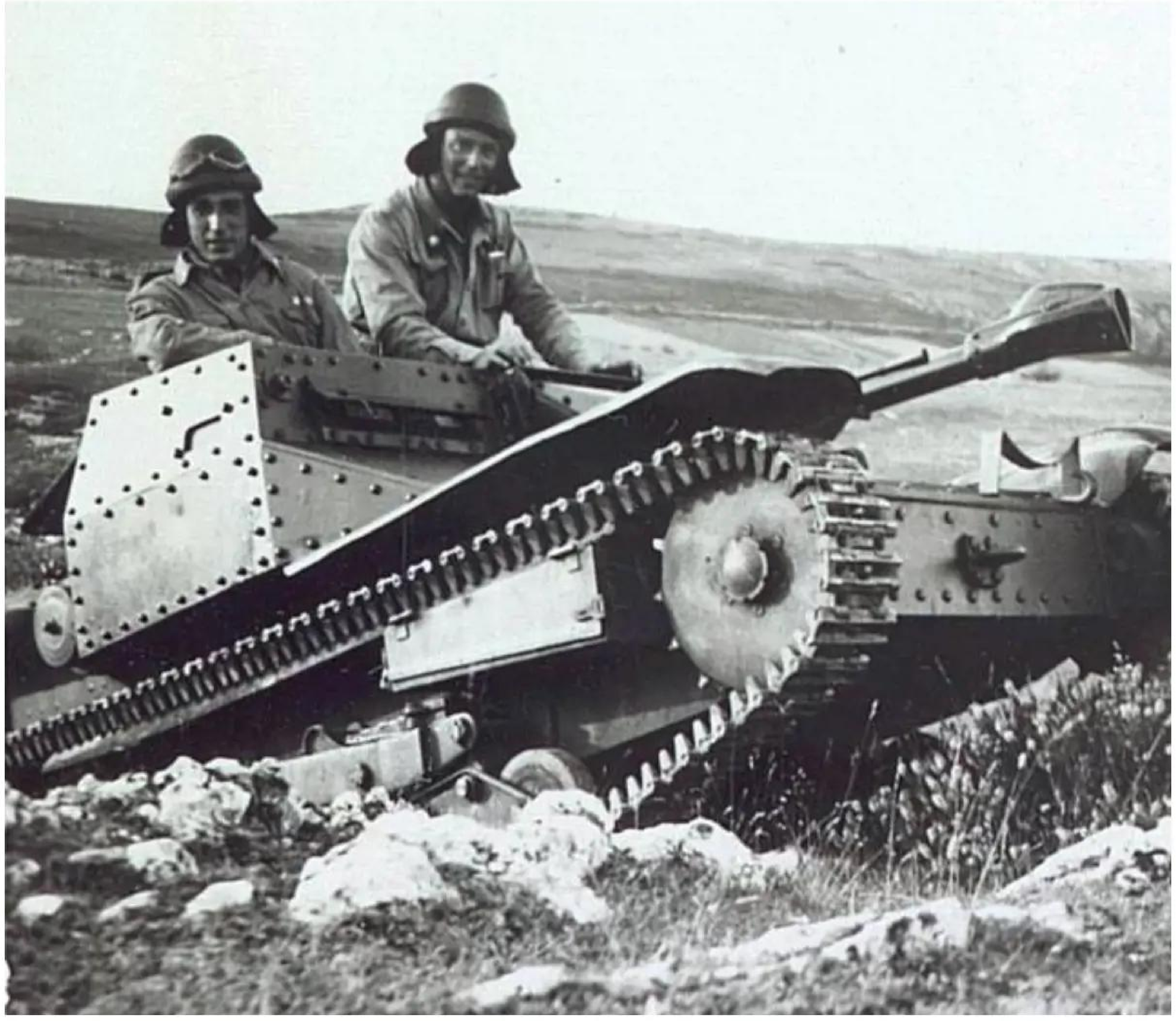
What occurred prior to the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War in 1936?

The origins of the Spanish Civil War went back a long way. Spain, under the Borbón monarchy, was an extremely unequal society and a predominantly agrarian one, where the politics of the nation had been run largely in the interests of the landowners. First, between 1923 and 1930, there was a dictatorship that failed to resolve any of the monarchy's problems, and this was followed, between the beginning of 1930 and April 1931, by an attempt to get back to how things had been under the disastrously failed monarchy. On 4 April 1931, the democratic Second Republic was founded. This was run by a coalition of socialists and what in Spain are called Republicans, which simply means they were not monarchists but liberals in favour of a republic. This moderate coalition introduced a series of reforms, including agrarian reform, which infuriated the right. There was a military coup in August of 1932, which was unsuccessful but made the conspirators determined that next time, they wouldn't fail.

Elections were held in November 1933, which brought in a right-wing government that subsequently dismantled all of the reforms of the previous two years. Hatred had been building on both sides and led, in October 1934, to an uprising of miners in the northern province of Asturias, which was put down by the military with incredible savagery. In February 1936, there were further elections, and tensions were running high. The left was convinced that the only way forward, legally, was to use their numerical superiority to win elections and get control of the apparatus of the state. The conclusion was drawn by the right that if the left achieved this, they would never win, and therefore, the only answer for them was a military coup. That took place on the evening of 17 July 1936.

What were some of the key events in the civil war?

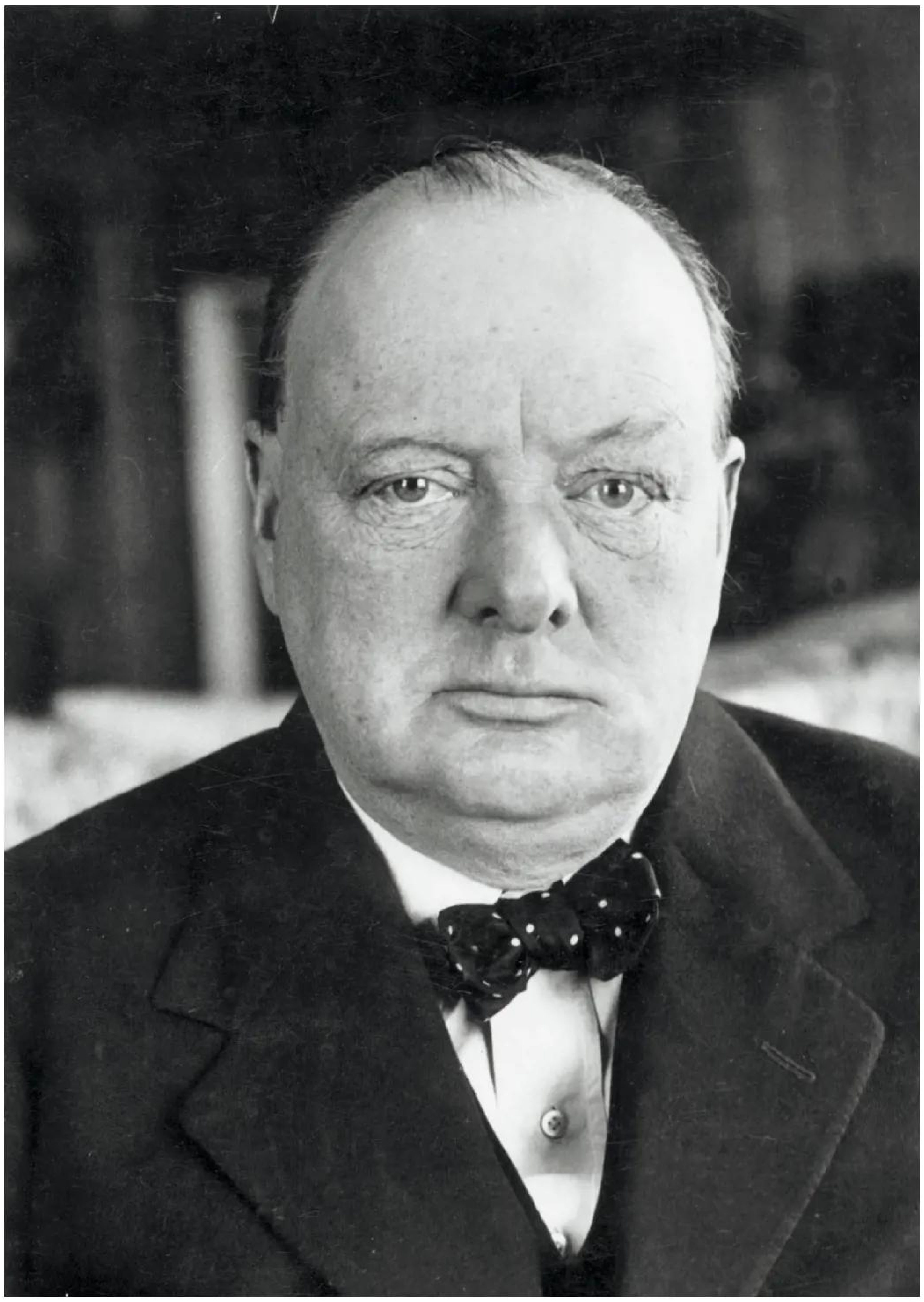
The most important events were, firstly, the decision of the British and French governments to follow a policy of non-intervention. This meant that the two big democracies refused to help their sister democracy and, therefore, deprived the Republic of the means of defending itself. It was unable to buy arms legally, and so was forced to use unscrupulous private arms dealers. The second issue was that Hitler's Germany and Mussolini's Italy saw the Spanish Civil War as a terrific opportunity to alter the international balance of power and focused on giving help to General Franco. Then, because Franco was making fast progress, the Soviet Union began to panic. A key part of Soviet foreign policy at that time was to try to encircle Germany, which primarily meant having a strong alliance with France. That meant not



RIGHT
A flamethrowing tank during the war

Interview by Jonathan O'Callaghan. Images: Getty Images

" Churchill, thought that Republic leader Juan Negrín would go for a policy of national reconciliation "



frightening the French right. However, the Soviets became concerned that if Franco were to win, it would see three fascist states surrounding France: Germany, Italy and a fascist Spain, possibly tipping the internal balance in France. So, somewhat reluctantly, the Soviet Union made the decision to help the Republic. This move was interpreted by Franco, and also in London, as proof that the Soviet Union wanted to establish a Soviet Spain, which was untrue. One of the consequences of Soviet aid was that while it gave the Republic enough support to fight on, it consolidated the decision of the British and the French not to help the Second Republic.

Why did the Nationalists ultimately emerge victorious?

The reason why Franco won was because the Republicans were not supported by Britain and France. However, there's also the issue that Franco commanded an army over which he had total discipline, and he imposed this on the territory they conquered, murdering over 150,000 people. In contrast, the Republic more or less remained a democracy, and within that democracy, you had disputes over how best to carry out the war efforts. So within the Republic, there was a very powerful anarchist movement and a significantly less powerful, but nonetheless influential, Trotskyist movement, both of whom wanted to begin a kind of revolutionary war. However, the socialists, communists and the liberal Republicans all preferred a conventional war effort. So, there's this big conflict within the Republican zone.

What was Spain like after the war under the Nationalist regime?

Franco had made it clear that his objective in the war was to create the conditions for a dictatorship that would last as long as possible. You might almost say that he thought Hitler's view of the Thousand-Year Reich was short-term thinking! Franco's military strategy was to go very slowly and to annihilate as many Republicans as possible. At the end of the war, about a million people were placed in concentration camps and prisons well into the middle of and beyond the 1940s. It was also a regime of plunder: the money, homes and property of Republicans were simply stolen. After the end of World War II, it would have been impossible to do all this. It happened while the eyes of the rest of the world were looking in another direction. That first repression from 1939 to 1945 is an investment in terror. During the Franco years (he died in 1975, but the dictatorship continued until 1977), a kind of national brainwashing took place, which convinced many Spaniards that Franco was the national saviour who kept them from the horrors of Soviet communism. Over time,

ABOVE LEFT
Churchill's book *Step By Step* outlines his approach to the Spanish Civil War

ABOVE RIGHT
General Franco, leader of the Nationalist forces

OPOSITE
A Republican howitzer in the Spanish Civil War

"Winston Churchill moved from supporting Franco to supporting the Republic"

Images: Getty Images, Alamy, Wiki Commons

the dictatorship softened a little. I lived in Spain from the late 1960s into the first years of the 1970s, and you were still very aware it was a dictatorship. There were Civil Guards, armed police on the streets. People I worked with were suddenly arrested for no apparent reason.

Were there any points during the war where the Republicans could've won?
Not really, no. The writing was on the wall really by the end of July 1936, when Germany and Italy had decided to help Franco, and Britain and France had decided not to help the Republic. Arguably, it's a miracle that the Republic continued to fight on for nearly three years. Now, how might things have been different? What if Britain and France had realised what Hitler and Mussolini were up to? But of course, they thought the policy of Hitler and Mussolini was anti-left. Policymakers were obsessed with the fear of the Soviet Union, and in a way, they almost thought that they could use Hitler as a kind of 'Rottweiler' to protect them from the Soviet Union.

What would Spain have looked like under Republican leadership?
If it had won, I think it's highly unlikely that there would have been communist leadership. There might have been a communist participation in a coalition, but it would not have been a communist regime. Let's take the case of Winston Churchill. At the beginning of the Spanish Civil War, Churchill was fiercely in support of the military rebels. He put together a book called *Step By Step*, containing his newspaper articles over this time. In it, you can trace how Churchill moved from support for Franco to support for the Republic because he thought it would be better for the British Empire. Whereas Franco enacted the most savage repression, had the Republic been victorious, many, including Churchill, thought that its leader Juan Negrín would go for a policy of national reconciliation.

How would this have affected the Second World War?
There are two ways of answering this. If Britain and France supported the Republic, then I think there would not have been a Second World War because that support would have ensured an early Republican victory and prevented the Axis powers from changing the international balance of power in their favour. Now, the other hypothesis of what might have happened if the Spanish Civil War went the distance, as it did, but miraculously the Republic won? Well, what we do know from the fall of Catalonia in January of 1939 is that Negrín was desperate to keep the war effort going because he believed that Britain and France would finally wake up to the real threat of Germany and Italy. If, as Negrín hoped, World War II broke out before the end of the Spanish Civil War, then it would have made a huge difference since Republican Spain, which was fighting Germany and Italy already, would have been allies of Britain and France. Interestingly, of course, Hitler and Mussolini were very aware of this. Indeed, one of the reasons why Hitler held off from provoking war was because he wanted to make sure that Franco was in power before he took the big step.

Who was Francisco Franco?

Born in 1892, Francisco Franco initially wanted to follow his father and grandfather into a naval career, but due to the academy being closed to cadets, he enrolled into an infantry academy instead. Despite graduating with below-average grades, he was able to prove himself during an insurgency in Spanish-controlled Morocco. He stayed there for 14 years, earning a reputation as a more than capable soldier, and at 33 was made the youngest general in the Spanish military. The Second Republic saw Franco as a possible threat (a suspicion proved by his actions suppressing the revolt in Asturias). As the next leftist government took control, Franco was essentially banished to the Canary Islands. Key to the right-wing Spanish forces, it was arranged for Englishman Cecil Bebb (along with his friend Major Hugh Pollard and two female companions) to fly to the Canaries and collect Franco. From here, he was taken to Tetuan in Spanish Morocco, where he was able to begin preparations for the coming war.

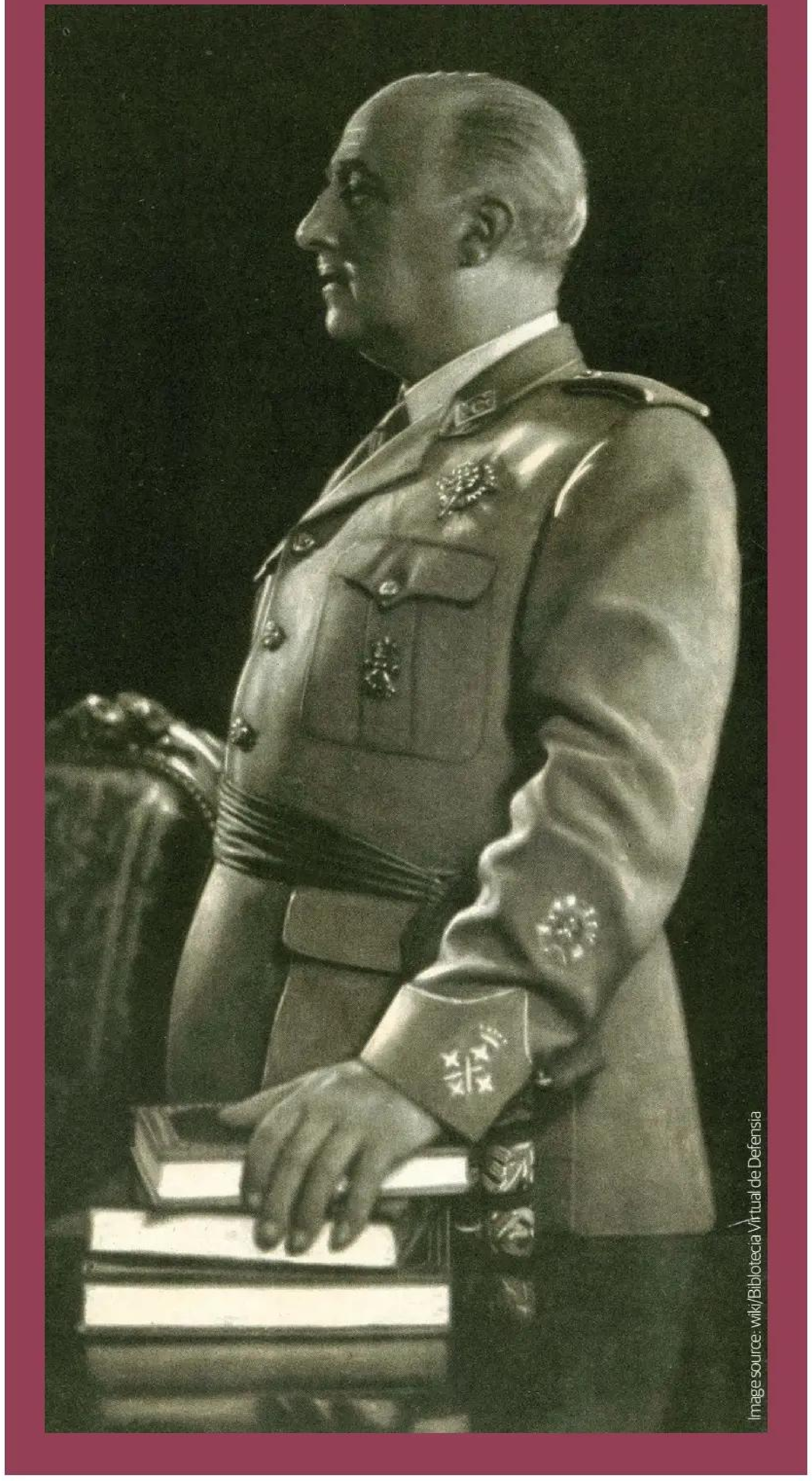


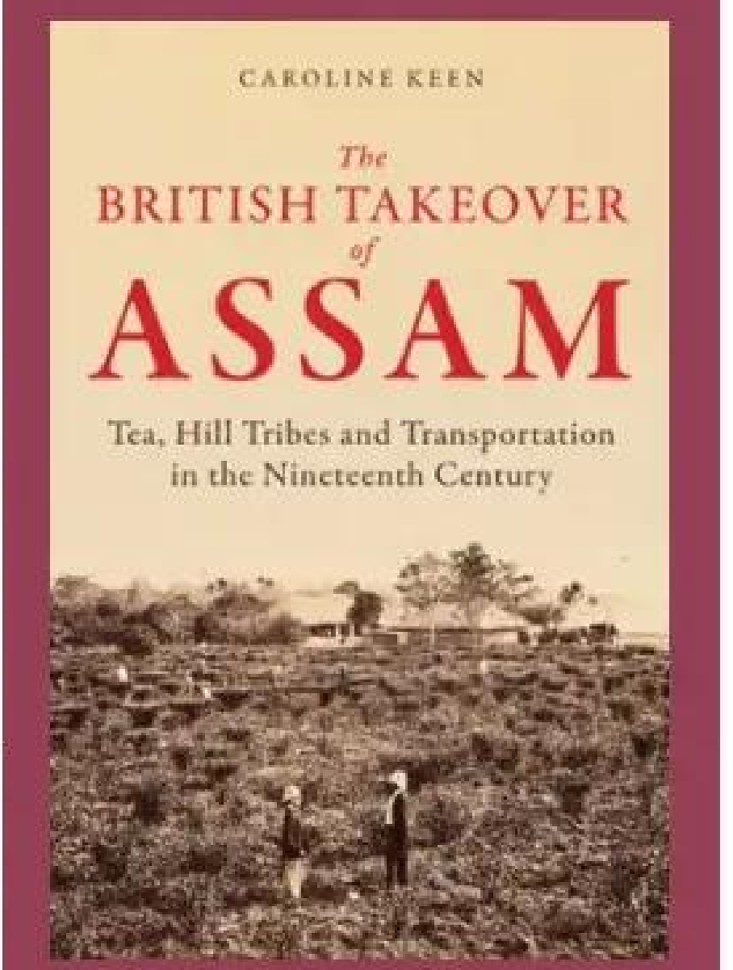
Image source: wiki/Biblioteca Virtual de Defensa

What if...

INDIA HAD NOT BEEN PARTITIONED?

A unified India would have likely become a more dominant economic and military superpower

INTERVIEW WITH


CAROLINE KEEN
The BRITISH TAKEOVER of ASSAM
Tea, Hill Tribes and Transportation in the Nineteenth Century

© Amberley

Caroline Keen

Caroline Keen holds a PhD from the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), University of London. She has written extensively on colonial India and has published three books: *A Judge In Madras* (2020), *An Imperial Crisis In British India* (2015) and *Princely India And The British* (2012).

After centuries of British rule, the transition to an independent state was never going to be easy. But added to the difficulties faced by such a seismic change, the break-up of the nation along its fault lines of belief was to prove the greatest – and bloodiest – challenge. Not all were in favour of such fragmentation, and had they succeeded in keeping the Indian nation intact, would it then have gone on to fulfil the potential its passion for independence and diverse culture promised, or would it have led to disaster?

What would have been the motivations for not partitioning?

The motivations for not partitioning India during its independence from British rule were complex and rooted in historical, social and cultural considerations. When partition occurred in 1947, creating India and Pakistan, many leaders and political groups were against it. The Indian National Congress (INC) leaders, particularly Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru, envisioned a united India that transcended religious, ethnic and linguistic divisions. They believed in the concept of a secular nation where Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Christians and others could coexist peacefully and saw partition as the loss of a shared heritage that had developed over centuries of residence in a common land. In addition, a united India was seen as a more economically viable entity. Critics feared that division would lead to economic instability and set back the progress of India and the newly created Pakistan. Politically, a single strong Indian state would be more influential on the world stage, whereas partition would weaken both newly formed nations. Importantly, many leaders feared that without the British Raj to maintain order and public security, partitioning would lead to large-scale communal violence between Hindus and Muslims, which ultimately happened.

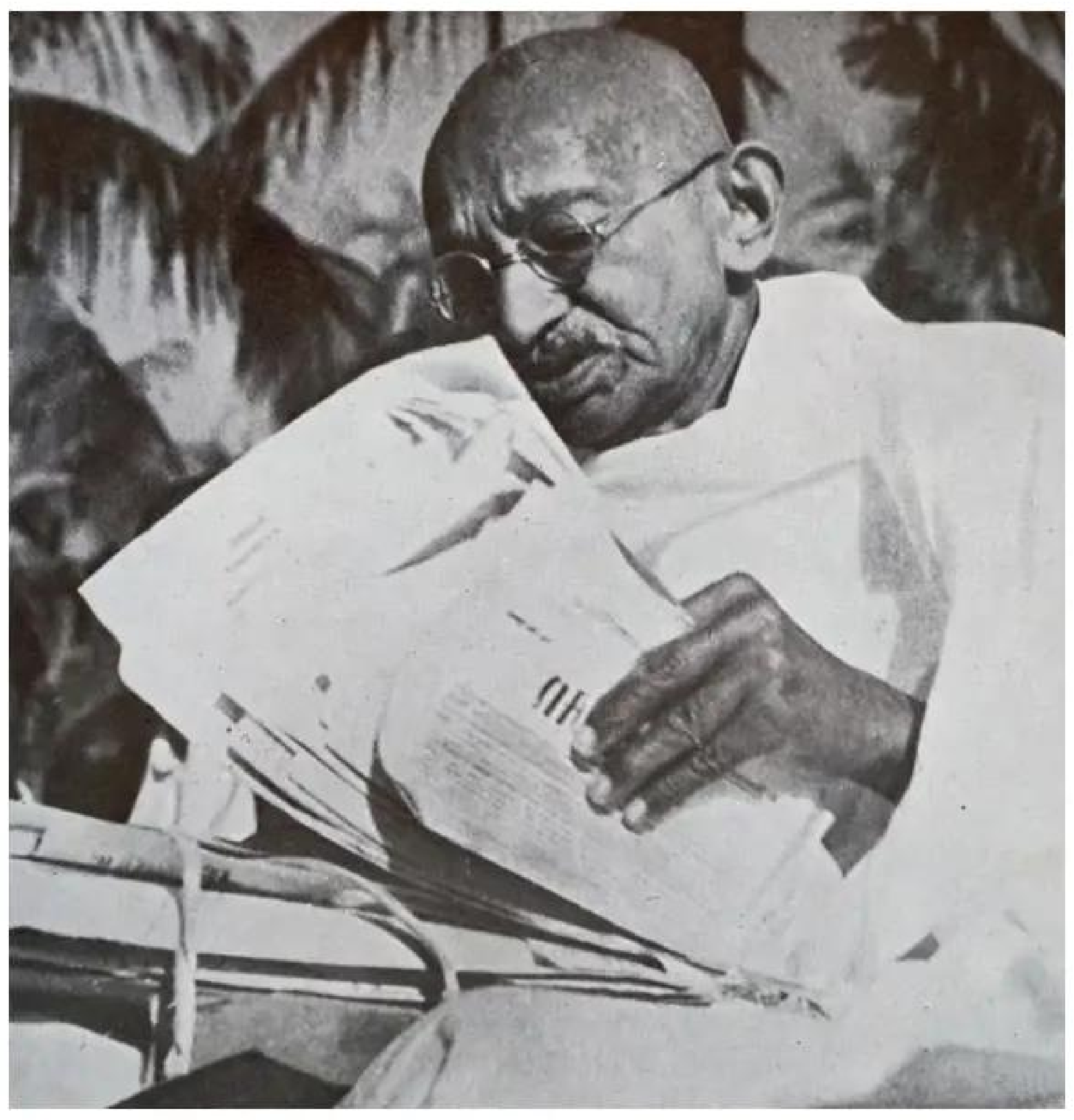
Was there another possible solution?

Possible alternatives to partition were, firstly, the British Cabinet Mission Plan (1946) which offered a three-tiered administrative structure with a central government in the top tier controlling defence, foreign affairs and communications; secondly, a more decentralised federal structure in which Muslim-majority areas would have considerable autonomy yet remain part of India; thirdly, granting autonomy to regions with significant Muslim populations (like Punjab, Bengal and Sindh) without partitioning the country; and, finally, a more radical suggestion to create a multinational federation or even a confederation of states within India.

These alternatives failed mainly because the Muslim League, under its leader Muhammad Ali Jinnah, had by the early 1940s grown insistent on the creation of Pakistan to provide Muslims with a separate nation for their distinct political and cultural needs. By the mid-1940s, relations between the INC and the Muslim League had deteriorated, largely because of Nehru's visceral hatred of Jinnah and the escalation of communal tensions between Hindus and Muslims, especially after events such as the 1946 Calcutta Killings. At the same time, the British, under pressure to exit India as early as possible under Lord Mountbatten of Burma, saw partition as the least threatening solution to the escalating Hindu-Muslim conflict, which, it was suggested, had its roots in the British government's divide and rule policies.

What might the social structure of India have looked like?

The subcontinent is one of the most culturally diverse regions in the world. Without partition, this diversity might have remained more integrated with fewer sharp religious divides. The cultural exchange between regions such as Punjab, Bengal, Sindh and Tamil Nadu would probably be more fluid, enhancing the subcontinent's rich linguistic, artistic and culinary traditions. Partition led to one of the largest forced migrations in human history, with millions crossing borders. Without this migration, communities that were previously mixed would have remained in place, leading



FAR RIGHT
The Map of India could look very different today

RIGHT
Gandhi opposed British rule but believed in a single Indian State

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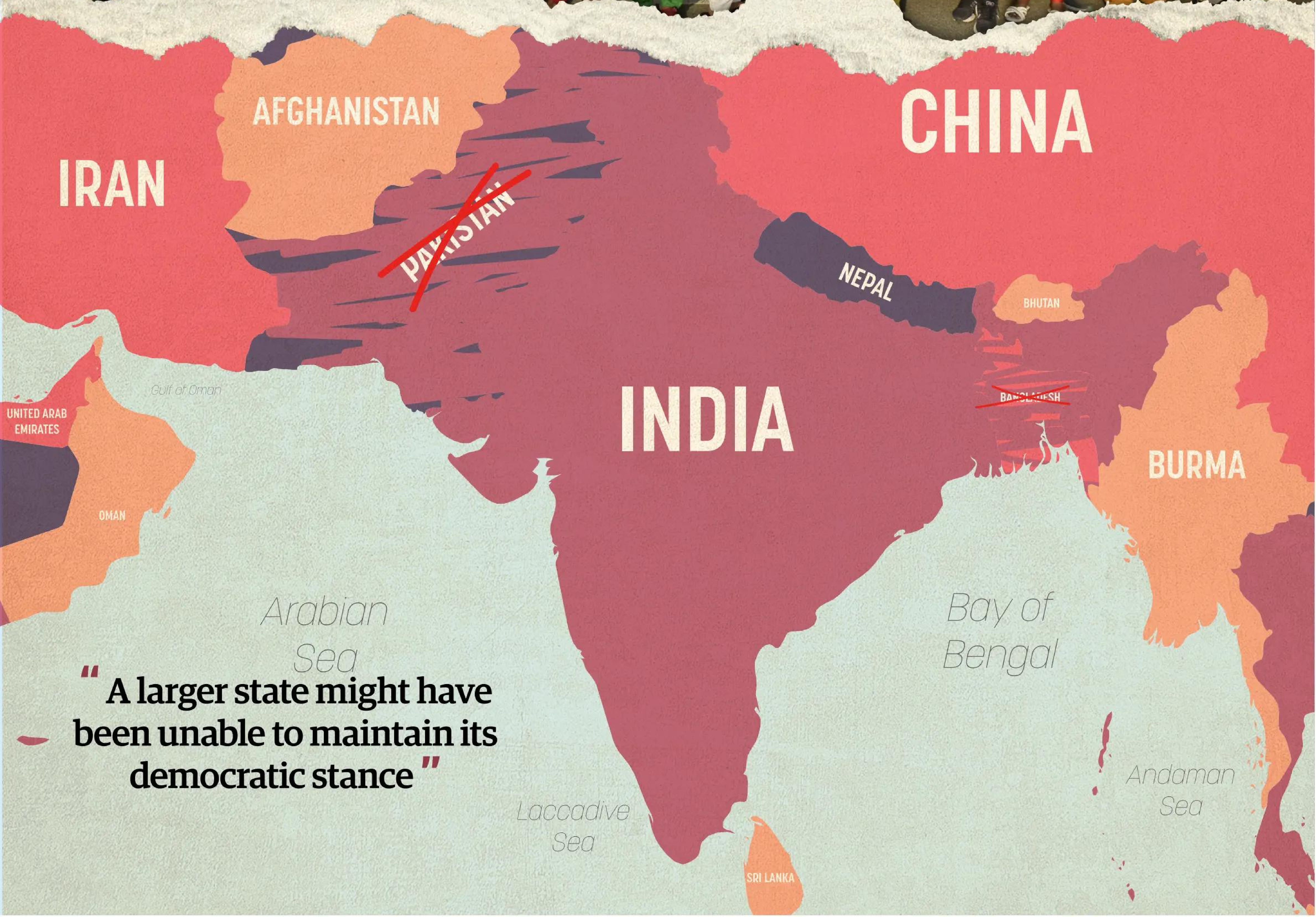
Interview by David J Williamson. **Main image source:** © Alamy, © Getty Images

What if…

INDIA HAD NOT BEEN PARTITIONED?

भारत INDIA
INDIA'S FIRST LINE OF DEFENCE


AFGHANISTAN
IRAN
CHINA
~~PAKISTAN~~
NEPAL
BHUTAN
~~BANGLADESH~~
INDIA
BURMA
UNITED ARAB EMIRATES
Gulf of Oman
OMAN
Arabian Sea
Bay of Bengal
Andaman Sea
Laccadive Sea
SRI LANKA

> “A larger state might have been unable to maintain its democratic stance”

THE PAST

1946

A COUNTRY DIVIDED

Following World War II, it was not by any means a done deal that India would be partitioned and the new states of Pakistan, and eventually Bangladesh, would be born. With a lack of enthusiasm from many of its leaders and the possibility of alternatives tabled by the outgoing British rulers, the whole issue seemed to float in the air. But the fault lines of religious difference had been drawn, and the harder the Muslim League pushed for an independent Muslim state, the greater the tension, and potential for violence, increased.

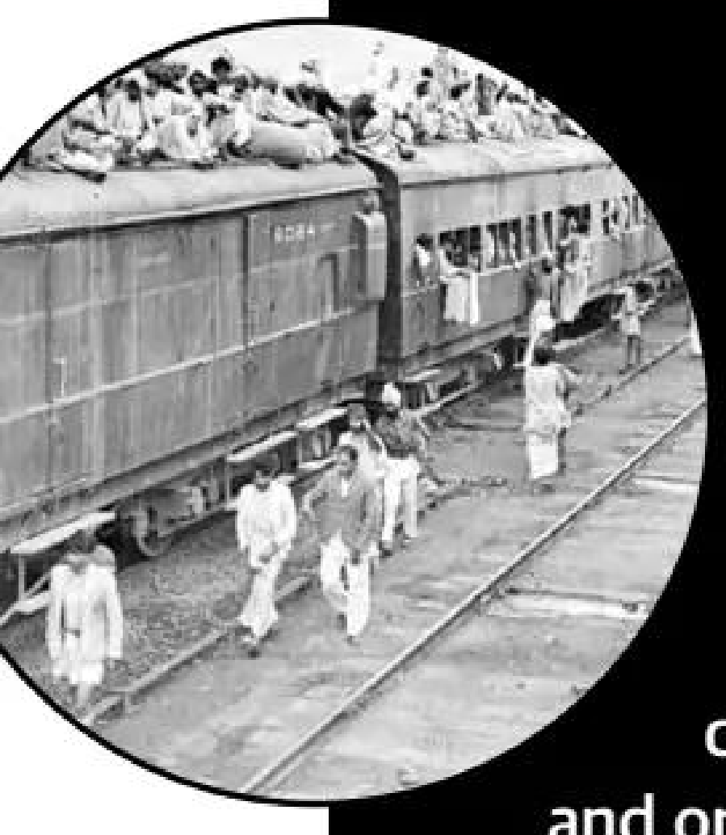
1947

MOUNTBATTEN INTERVENES

Things were to come to a head this year when the drive for Britain to withdraw from India and the increased tensions led the last viceroy of India, Admiral Lord Louis Mountbatten, to conclude that partition was the only answer to an increasingly complex and troubling situation. The three states of India, West Pakistan, and East Pakistan would be created, mainly along religious lines. Those Princely States not affiliated with any particular group would have the right to choose which of the three they would align with. This, in itself, was to possibly increase tension and unrest rather than resolve it.

15 AUG 1947-1948

MASS MIGRATION



On 15 August 1947, India was granted independence from centuries of British rule. The Indian army was left in a state of uncertainty and disarray, and it couldn't maintain the levels of law and order it had. Millions were left on the wrong sides of borders and mass migration ensued. Violence erupted on a phenomenal scale, with an estimated 200,000 killed in the Punjab alone. By 1948, the British army was gone, leaving a vacuum filled with prejudice and lawlessness. Tensions between India and Pakistan were almost immediate, with former army colleagues facing, and even fighting, each other across a border in areas such as Kashmir. Tensions that still exist today.

to a more integrated social fabric. Cities like Lahore, Dhaka and Kolkata would have retained their multicultural essence. However, the challenges of managing ethnic and regional differences could have been significant with potential tensions. The subcontinent has many ethnic groups, languages and regional identities which demand recognition. A larger, united state would have had to navigate these complexities and there might have been more regional autonomous movements in areas like Baluchistan, Bengal and the northeast. Sikhs, who were disproportionately impacted by partition, might have pushed for greater autonomy within a united India or may have aligned with other groups to create a more autonomous Punjab.

How might the politics of India have changed with no partition?

Partition, while tragic, provided a short-term resolution to the communalist pressures building up under colonial rule which might have remained a persistent and destabilising factor in Indian society, possibly leading to localised conflicts or even civil war over time. A united subcontinent would have needed a strong federal structure to control its huge diversity and Muslim-majority provinces such as Punjab, Bengal and Sindh would have required significant autonomy. Without partition, the Muslim League might have remained a strong force in politics, challenging the post-partition trajectory of secularism in Indian politics. Negotiating power between religious communities, particularly Hindus and Muslims, would have required continuous political change, potentially leading to models of power-sharing like Lebanon, where multiple religious groups have constitutionally defined roles. A united subcontinent would have had a more complex political outlook, and a larger state might have been unable to maintain its democratic stance in the face of authoritarian challenges from religious and secular movements. However, with parties such as the Unionist Party, Janata Dal, the Awami League, Biju Janata Dal and the Awami National Party featuring strongly in national politics, religiously divisive parties such as the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) would have been less likely to flourish.

What would it have meant for religious diversity?

Without partition, India would have had an even larger Muslim population as Muslims made up about 20-30 per cent of British India's population. This would have required an extensive process of power-sharing between Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs and other communities, and tensions could have continued in areas experiencing sharp religious divisions. Although Indian leaders like Nehru championed secularism, with a larger Muslim population, the political doctrine of secularism would have been vigorously debated. The pressure to adopt a more religious-based legal system would have been greater, leading to a possible compromise between secular and religious laws. Islamic solidarity and pan-Islamic movements might have had a

BELOW Millions were displaced on the wrong side of borders.

ABOVE
Lord Mountbatten saw partition as the only option

BELOW
Indian leaders had to find a workable solution

stronger voice in politics, especially with the influence of the Muslim Brotherhood or other Islamist groups. Religious minorities, particularly Muslims in a united India or Hindus in Bengal, would have faced challenges, and how effectively a larger subcontinent would have been able to protect the rights of those minorities remains an open question. Moreover, a larger Muslim population might have played a complex role in caste dynamics. While Islam formally rejects caste, many Indian Muslims retain caste-like identities, influencing political movements and social reform efforts to deal with caste inequalities.

How would non-partition impact on India's allies and neighbours?

A united India-Pakistan-Bangladesh would be a geopolitical heavyweight. The combination of a vast population, a considerable geographic reach and substantial military capabilities would have positioned the subcontinent as a major player. It might have wielded more influence in organisations such as the UN, the Non-Aligned Movement and other international bodies. A larger India could have wielded more influence in Afghanistan, possibly preventing Pakistan from becoming a conduit for US and Saudi intervention during the Soviet-Afghan War. Relations with China would also have been altered. Without the 1947 partition, the India-China border might have been less contentious, particularly in Tibet (although unresolved territorial claims could still have caused friction), and a stronger and larger India could have led to different outcomes in the 1962 Sino-Indian War. India could also have had a greater influence on Sri Lanka, particularly in resolving ethnic tensions and the Tamil-Sinhalese conflict.

A unified military would have been one of the largest in the world. Instead of India and Pakistan being nuclear-armed adversaries, the subcontinent's military forces could have been focused on other regional threats or peacekeeping roles. During the Cold War, India and Pakistan were influenced by the global rivalry between the United States and the Soviet Union. A united subcontinent might have maintained a more non-aligned stance or could have faced significant pressure from both superpowers to align with one side.

How would India's remaining a single state impact its economy?

A united subcontinent would have created one of the largest consumer markets in the world. The distribution of natural resources would be more balanced. Pakistan's fertile Punjab and water resources, Bangladesh's textile and natural gas industries, and India's large industrial and agricultural base would all contribute to huge economic growth. Industrial and infrastructural development would probably be more balanced, with economic centres spread across the entire subcontinent. Karachi, Lahore, Kolkata, Mumbai and Delhi could all act as hubs for different industries, reducing regional economic disparities. Better regional integration might also have boosted trade with neighbouring countries like Nepal, Bhutan and Myanmar, and cross-border trade with China and Central Asia could have been facilitated more easily.

A unified India might have allowed greater integration of education and healthcare policies. However, the economic challenges of coordinating three regions with different development levels after partition could have been substantial. A united government might struggle with distribution of resources. No doubt the huge financial drain to support hostilities between India and Pakistan could have been used for substantial development. On the flip side, to manage wider religious, ethnic and regional tensions a more robust and inclusive internal security apparatus would be required, demanding significant funding.

THE POSSIBILITY

1950S ONWARDS

WOMEN'S RIGHTS

It is highly likely that without partition, through sheer numbers and a more secular approach, a unified subcontinent would have championed wider women's rights. The need for less division across religious grounds to maintain a stable social and political geography would open the door to more forward-thinking that may, in the short term, have gone against the grain of some cultural and religious beliefs. But, with greater world trade and a more open approach to diverse social change, women's rights, education and social standing may have emerged as winners.

SECURITY FOR WOMEN
INTERNATI WOMEN'S ZINDAB

1950S ONWARDS

STRENGTH THROUGH SPORT

A unified rather than partitioned India would have seen the benefits of an immense pool of skills and abilities, not least of all in sports. Today, we see India, Pakistan and Bangladesh compete on the world stage in their own right. But if we were to imagine a single state with such talented sportsmen and women competing under one flag, then that in turn would open the door to a far greater strength in depth across a far greater number of sporting activities around the globe and with it the opportunities for success as a major sporting nation.

1950S ONWARDS

SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND MILITARY MIGHT

A worrying outcome from partition was the deeply held distrust that has become engrained between India and Pakistan – made even more troubling by their ability to each wield the threat of nuclear war. Long-running border disputes have not faded, but as a single nation that military might could have worked for the greater good of India, giving it a major voice in the plans and ambitions in the region of other world powers. Add to this the potential pool of talent available in science and technology, and the willingness of countries to invest in a strong regional player and immense market, that would make a united India a world economic force much earlier than it did.

MAKE LOVE
OT WA

All images: © Alamy, Getty Images

What if…

THE USSR HAD INVENTED THE ATOMIC BOMB FIRST?

A Soviet victory in the race for the atomic bomb could have meant a very different Cold War…

© Headshot image: Stanford University

INTERVIEW WITH

David J Holloway

David J Holloway is professor emeritus at Stanford University and the author of *Stalin and the Bomb: The Soviet Union and Atomic Energy, 1939-1956* (1994) and the essay *Nuclear Weapons and the Cold War in Europe* (2013).

When physicists Lise Meitner and Otto Frisch discovered nuclear fission in December 1938, the possibility of an atomic weapon became a frightening reality. Scientists from several countries began work, seeking to produce such a device. However, after being invaded by Nazi Germany in 1941, the Soviet Union chose instead to focus efforts on repelling the enemy. Meanwhile, in the United States, the Manhattan Project saw a team of experts led by Robert J Oppenheimer devote vast resources to ensuring America was the leader in the race. In 1945, Oppenheimer was ultimately victorious, but what if the bomb had fallen first into the hands of the Soviet Union? Would the weapon have been detonated not over Hiroshima, but Berlin? Would we still have had the Cold War?

What exactly was the Soviet atomic project, and how did it fit into the wider race for the bomb taking place during the 1940s?

When nuclear fission was discovered at the end of 1938, Soviet scientists were as excited about the discovery as physicists in other countries. They did work on investigating the possibility of a nuclear fission chain reaction, as either a power reactor or an explosive reaction – a bomb. But in June of 1941, when the Germans invaded the Soviet Union, the work was ended. There were much more immediate tasks at hand because the German armies advanced rapidly and were quickly able to threaten Moscow. Despite this, the Soviet Union did learn about the work going on, initially in Britain and then in the United States, through their intelligence service. Perhaps most importantly, they were able to obtain a copy of the MAUD report, which was a classified report investigating the possibility of using uranium to construct a bomb. One of the famous Cambridge Five spies transmitted the report to Moscow in October of 1941, at almost exactly the same time it was being briefed to President Roosevelt in Washington DC. So the Soviet Union was on par with the US in terms of scientific knowledge regarding an atomic weapon. However, while the report helped to speed up the Manhattan Project, it was largely ignored by the Soviet Union. Lavrentiy Beria, who was head of Soviet intelligence, feared that it was a scam designed to distract them. Additionally, the prospect of a bomb in two or three years, which is essentially what the MAUD report stated, didn't seem very interesting when you're desperately trying to defend Moscow against the German attack. However, when intelligence came to Moscow about German work on a potential bomb, Stalin signed the decree setting up a small experimental project of their own.

How much more advanced was the Manhattan Project?

The thing to remember is that although the US entered the war in December 1941, it was not subject to invasion or bombing in the way the Soviet Union was. By that point, the German armies had Leningrad under siege and were even threatening Moscow. Indeed, when Stalin signed the decree setting up the relatively small project, it was just as the Battle for Stalingrad was beginning. The scientist who was put in charge, Igor Kurchatov, had to assemble his group at a time when the country was fighting to defend itself. Meanwhile, Roosevelt has given authorisation to turn the American research on the bomb into an industrial project. I think we forget that the Manhattan Project employed maybe 120,000 people. So that's the key difference. What you see in the Soviet Union is a pre-industrial project on the bomb, which is constantly receiving espionage concerning the Manhattan Project. The scientists involved were very conscious that they were lagging behind.

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RIGHT
Mushroom cloud over Nagasaki

THE PAST

1942-1946

J ROBERT OPPENHEIMER

J Robert Oppenheimer was a gifted physicist, chosen as the scientific director of the American attempt to create an atomic weapon, the Manhattan Project. It was during the war that Oppenheimer became interested in the possibility of nuclear bombs, concerned that Nazi Germany may possibly have already been creating such a weapon. Oppenheimer chose Los Alamos as the site for the project and on 16 July 1945, tested 'Trinity', their first atomic weapon. Oppenheimer was opposed to the bombing of Nagasaki and later, after the war, to the development of the more powerful hydrogen bomb. He was targeted during the 'Red Scare' for supposedly having communist sympathies.

1943

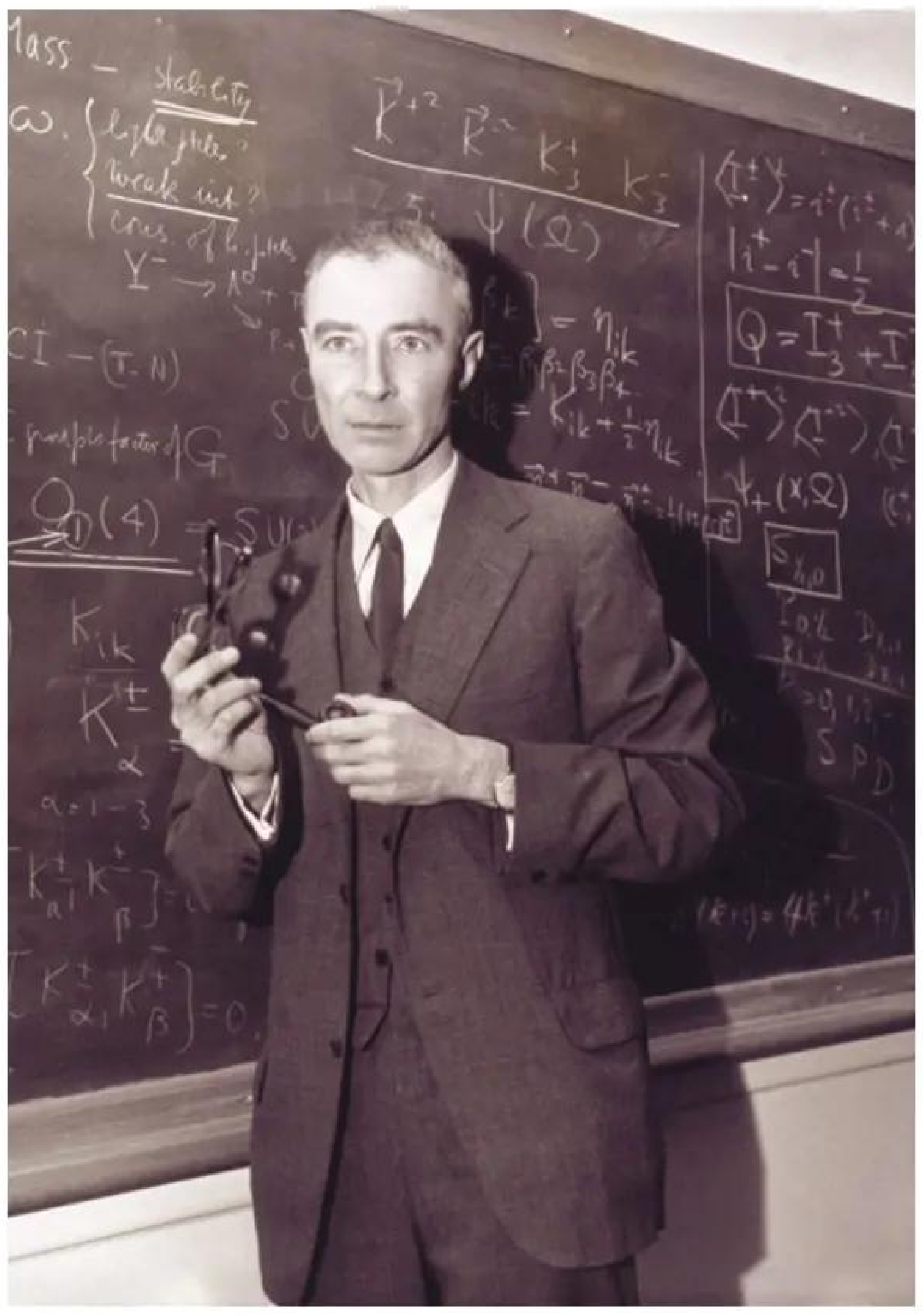
KLAUS FUCHS

Klaus Fuchs was a scientist who, in 1943, joined the Manhattan Project. However, Fuchs was also a spy who provided information to the Soviet Union on the development of the American atomic project. He was discovered in 1949 when the United States and Great Britain cracked the famous VENONA codes used by Soviet spies. Fuchs would be sentenced to 14 years and would then move to East Germany, passing away in 1988. The importance of the information supplied by Fuchs to the Soviet atomic project remains a source of debate. However, some argue that his information helped to save the Soviet project precious time.

1943

IGOR KURCHATOV

Igor Kurchatov was the director of the Soviet nuclear programme. Kurchatov was known for wearing a large beard, which he stated would not be cut until the programme succeeded. Kurchatov would later pursue the peaceful use of nuclear technology, becoming fearful of the potential use of atomic weapons. Aware of his own responsibility, he sought to argue against further testing. Despite the success of the Soviet nuclear project, he continued to wear his beard for the remainder of his life.



ABOVE LEFT
J Robert Oppenheimer, the 'father of the atomic bomb' – would Kurchatov have been given this title instead?

ABOVE RIGHT
The first successful Soviet atomic test, known as 'first lightning'

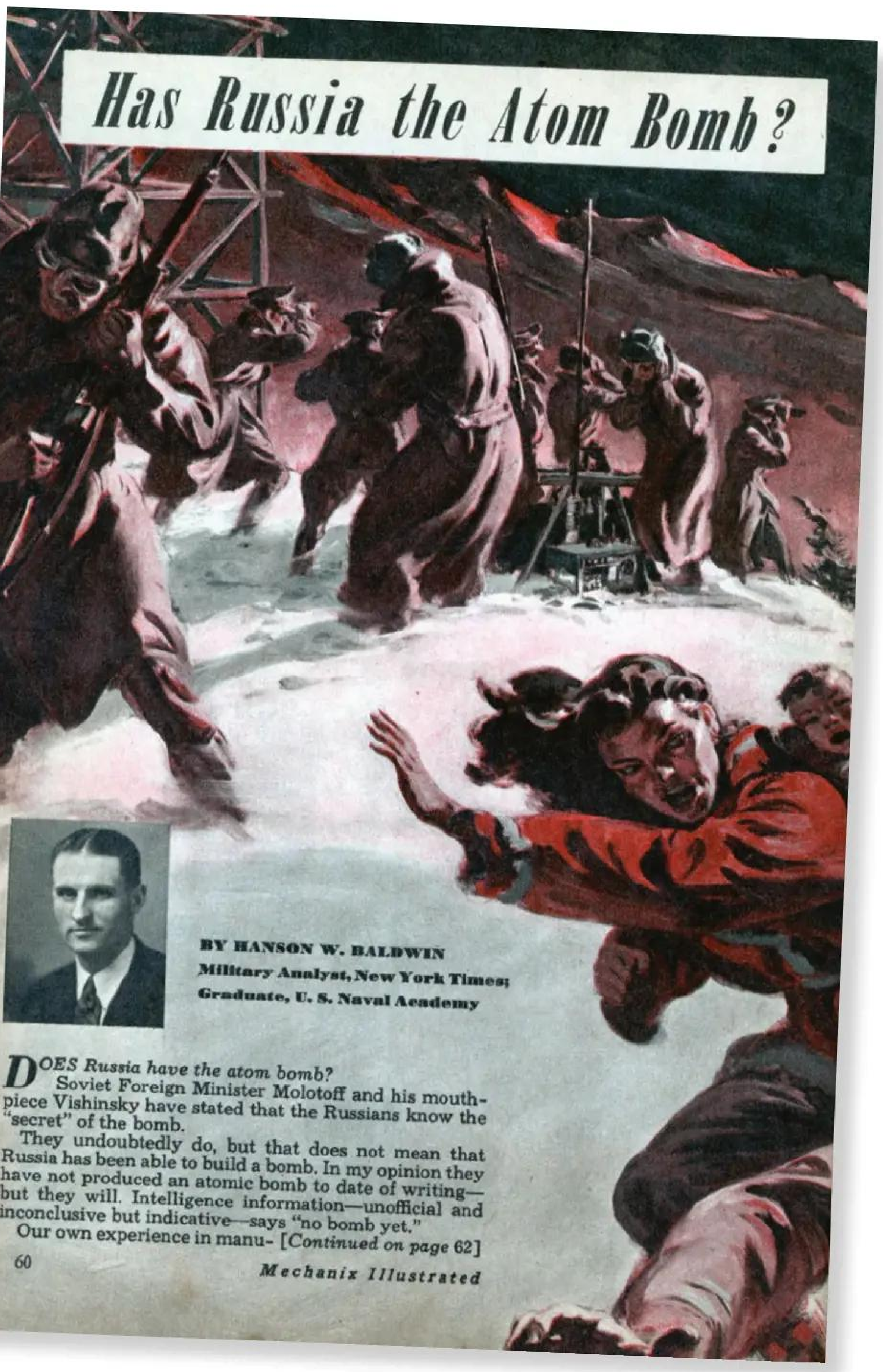
So it's likely that it would never have been possible for Kurchatov's group to have overtaken the Manhattan Project any time?
No, I don't think it would have been possible. Just given the conditions of the war. Even if they had decided, let's say before the German attack, to set up the atomic industry to produce the bomb, I doubt it would have been able to survive the subsequent Nazi attack. Due to the timescale, I think the question would be, 'We're fighting for our lives, how can we be concerned about a bomb that might appear in two or three years?'

What was the Soviet Union's reaction to the Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombings?
The Soviet Union had very detailed intelligence about the Manhattan Project, but they appear not to have had any intelligence about the plan to use the bomb against Japan. It was a shock for Moscow, and a couple of weeks after the bombing of Hiroshima, on 22 August 1945, Stalin signed a decree turning the small but growing Soviet nuclear project into a crash programme to develop the bomb as quickly as possible. They had actually received information about the design of the plutonium bomb, the type dropped on Nagasaki, and it was that design they decided to copy. And so, the first Soviet test, which was in August 1949, was actually a copy of the Nagasaki bomb.

What would it have taken for the Soviets to develop the bomb first?
First of all, it would have taken a decision to invest in a very large industrial project to develop the bomb. Additionally, this decision would have to be taken before the summer of 1942, when the United States chose to go ahead with their project and would have had to disregard any cost. Even for the US, that was a major decision taken largely on advice from scientists that not only would this be possible but that maybe the Germans were already building one. In the Soviet Union, there wasn't that great trust between the leadership and the scientists.

The second thing is that, even if they had made that decision, the war would still have changed everything. During the German attack, all resources were devoted to the Soviet Union's defence. When Kurchatov was trying to set up his small laboratory, he could hardly get anyone to pay attention to him because everyone was under enormous pressure to fulfil different tasks for weapons production. He even writes a letter complaining about this to Beria.

If the Soviet Union had developed the bomb first, would it have been detonated during the war? Possibly over Germany?
It's certainly possible. The fighting to seize Berlin was ferocious and went on until May 1945, and the use of the bomb might have been regarded as 'helpful' in ending the war. For Britain, strategic bombing was an extremely important part of the way the war was fought, especially after Dunkirk and the British were out of the European continent. But that was not the case with the Soviet



Has Russia the Atom Bomb?

BY HANSON W. BALDWIN
Military Analyst, New York Times;
Graduate, U. S. Naval Academy

DOES Russia have the atom bomb?

Soviet Foreign Minister Molotoff and his mouthpiece Vishinsky have stated that the Russians know the "secret" of the bomb.

They undoubtedly do, but that does not mean that Russia has been able to build a bomb. In my opinion they have not produced an atomic bomb to date of writing—but they will. Intelligence information—unofficial and inconclusive but indicative—says "no bomb yet."

Our own experience in manu- [*Continued on page 62*]

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Mechanix Illustrated

LEFT
A nuclear staffer cleans the first Soviet nuclear bomb, tested in 1949

ABOVE
An article from 1948 demonstrating the fear that the Soviet Union could possibly develop an atomic weapon

Union. The Soviet strategic bombing didn't really play a serious role in their attack on Germany. Their air force was used more in a tactical role to support land forces. However, one could still argue that at the very end of the war, they could have put a bomb on a plane to destroy specific German cities. And that would certainly have been conceivable.

Do you think, ultimately, we still would have ended up with a Cold War?
Yes, I think so. Because there was still the kind of fundamental ideological difference between the Soviet Union and the United States. The Soviet Union did see victory in the war as another step in the progress towards communism. However, I think the Cold War would have been different because the American monopoly on the bomb, or the great lead it had from 1949, made it much easier for the US to make the commitment it did to the post-war defence of Europe. When Eisenhower decided European powers couldn't afford politically or economically to reach the troop levels NATO required, there was always the option to send nuclear weapons to Europe. But I think the fact of the American monopoly initially, and then its superiority in the number of weapons, made certain decisions easier for the US than they would otherwise have been. And so the Cold War could have taken a different shape.

Do you think then we would be feeling the effects now, or do you think we'd still be very much in the same world?
I mean, ultimately, it would not have made much of a difference because we still would have had two sides with nuclear weapons. The US would still have built up its nuclear forces - after all, it was economically and technologically more powerful than the Soviet Union. Its economy had not been damaged in the same way the Soviet economy was subjected to huge destruction during the war. So I think we still would have got to a point of probably strategic parity and mutually assured destruction, and then it would have been a rivalry of which system was better. So, ultimately, I don't think that the Soviet Union having more weapons initially would have made that much difference to the eventual outcome.

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THE POSSIBILITY

1938

THE NAZI ATOMIC PROJECT

While the Soviet Union most likely could not have developed an atomic weapon before the US, one possibility is that the Nazi project may have been successful before either of them. Nuclear fission was discovered in Berlin in 1938, creating panic in America that the Nazis were on their way to weaponising this discovery. Kurt Diebner was in charge of the project, but several scientific miscalculations meant the project lagged behind its American counterpart. The Nazi project relied on expensive heavy water, and when the key plant producing this material was destroyed, the project lagged even further behind.

1945

HIROSHIMA AND NAGASAKI

On 6 and 9 August 1945, the United States detonated two atomic bombs over the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, killing thousands. The next day, the Japanese government agreed to a surrender. The decision by President Truman to use atomic weapons, not once but twice, remains a controversial and divisive one. However, if the Soviet Union had been able to develop an atomic weapon first during World War II, would we have seen the devastating weapons detonated over Europe?

1948-49

NUCLEAR MONOPOLY

The United States' monopoly on nuclear weapons after the end of WWII meant it could rely on the nuclear threat to help defend Europe. Indeed, during the Berlin blockade of 1948-49, a number of B-29 bombers were transferred to the area to demonstrate the willingness of the United States to use nuclear weapons against the Soviet Union if necessary. However, although David J Holloway suggests the US would always have been able to develop the number of weapons necessary for a monopoly, would they have been able to secure this hold on Europe?

What if...

JAPAN REFUSED TO SURRENDER?

Massive invasions by the Americans and the Soviets planned after first-ever atomic bomb attacks fail to dent Japan's resolve

INTERVIEW WITH

© Professor Robert Pape

Professor Robert Pape

Robert Pape is professor of Political Science at the University of Chicago. He is an expert in international security affairs, and in 1993 published a detailed journal article on Japan's surrender in WWII.

What was the background to the US dropping two atomic bombs on Japan in August 1945?

We defeated Germany in the spring of 1945 and then started to really focus on Japan. That became the main theatre of war. As the summer continued, it became clear that the city bombings of Japan and the military pressures that we were putting Japan under were not going to be enough. It wasn't clear exactly what the future was going to be. We had meetings with the Soviets at Potsdam in July, and it became very clear that the Soviets were going to launch a ground defence within Manchuria against the Japanese army. That set of meetings then essentially made it clear that if the United States was going to play a role, it was the atomic bomb that was really going to be the option here.

Why did Japan announce its decision to surrender on 15 August 1945?

The first atomic bomb actually is not generating much pressure on the Japanese political leaders to surrender. The key obstacle, it turns out, which we did not know at the time, was the Japanese army. [Korechika] Anami, the top general of the Japanese army, was the most resistant to any surrender. And, after we dropped the first bomb on Hiroshima, there's a continued logjam. Then, on the night of 8 August, the Soviet Union launches this massive invasion of Manchuria. And it is just a crushing blow. They just are piercing right through the Japanese army like a hot knife through butter, and within hours, [the Japanese army is] just cut to pieces. They're not able to put up any organised resistance. About 12 hours after the Soviet invasion happened, that's when we dropped the second bomb, and that's when Anami stops putting up resistance. He essentially stopped vetoing the surrender. It's Anami's decision that really leads to the surrender, and that veto is tightly linked to the Soviet invasion.

How did Japan's surrender play out?

[After the Soviet invasion], the whole plan for the home island defence now was completely worthless. That's when Anami stops resisting. Then he goes even further about a day later because the Japanese army had a plan that if the emperor were to surrender without their agreement, they were going to kill the emperor and replace them with Anami. Well, Anami commits hara-kiri [a form of suicide], and that prevents the military plan from being executed. He decapitates that plan so that the surrender actually happens. And then, on 15 August, that's when the emperor announces the surrender. It's a really important event, that speech for the surrender, because all the resistance essentially ends. That's the turning point where there's just no resistance

What would the Americans have done if Japan hadn't surrendered?

We know what would have happened in the very next month or so. There are four home islands of Japan. Kyushu is the southernmost island. That was going to be the target of the first invasion, and that was going to happen sometime in that early fall, of 1945, had Japan not surrendered. When the Soviets invaded Manchuria and just wiped [the Japanese army] to pieces, this showed that the Japanese army's plan for homeland

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RIGHT
Japan formally signed its surrender on 2 September 1945

Images: © Alamy, Getty Images

HOKKAIDO
Sapporo
5th Area Army
11th Area Army
Sendai
HONSHU
12th Area Army (10th Air Division)
TOKYO
Yokohama
Nagoya
13th Area Army
Osaka
Kobe
Hiroshima
Kure
Inland Sea
SHIKOKU
15th Area Army (11th Air Division)
Yawata
Fukuoka
Sasebo
Nagasaki
KYUSHU
16th Area Army (12th Air Division)

THE PAST

7 DECEMBER 1941

OUT OF THE BLUE

The US naval base at Pearl Harbor in Hawaii is attacked by Japanese forces. The Japanese had already occupied all of Indochina and had entered into an alliance with Germany and Italy. Commerce agreements had been cancelled and Japanese goods were under embargo. Negotiations were taking place but getting nowhere. With the first Japanese wave, US planes were attacked on the ground. More than 150 were destroyed. In the harbour, with the fleet moored for the weekend, almost 20 ships were sunk or damaged. Around 2,400 military personnel were killed and over 1,145 injured. Although humiliated by the attack, it galvanised the American people behind going to war.

1942-43

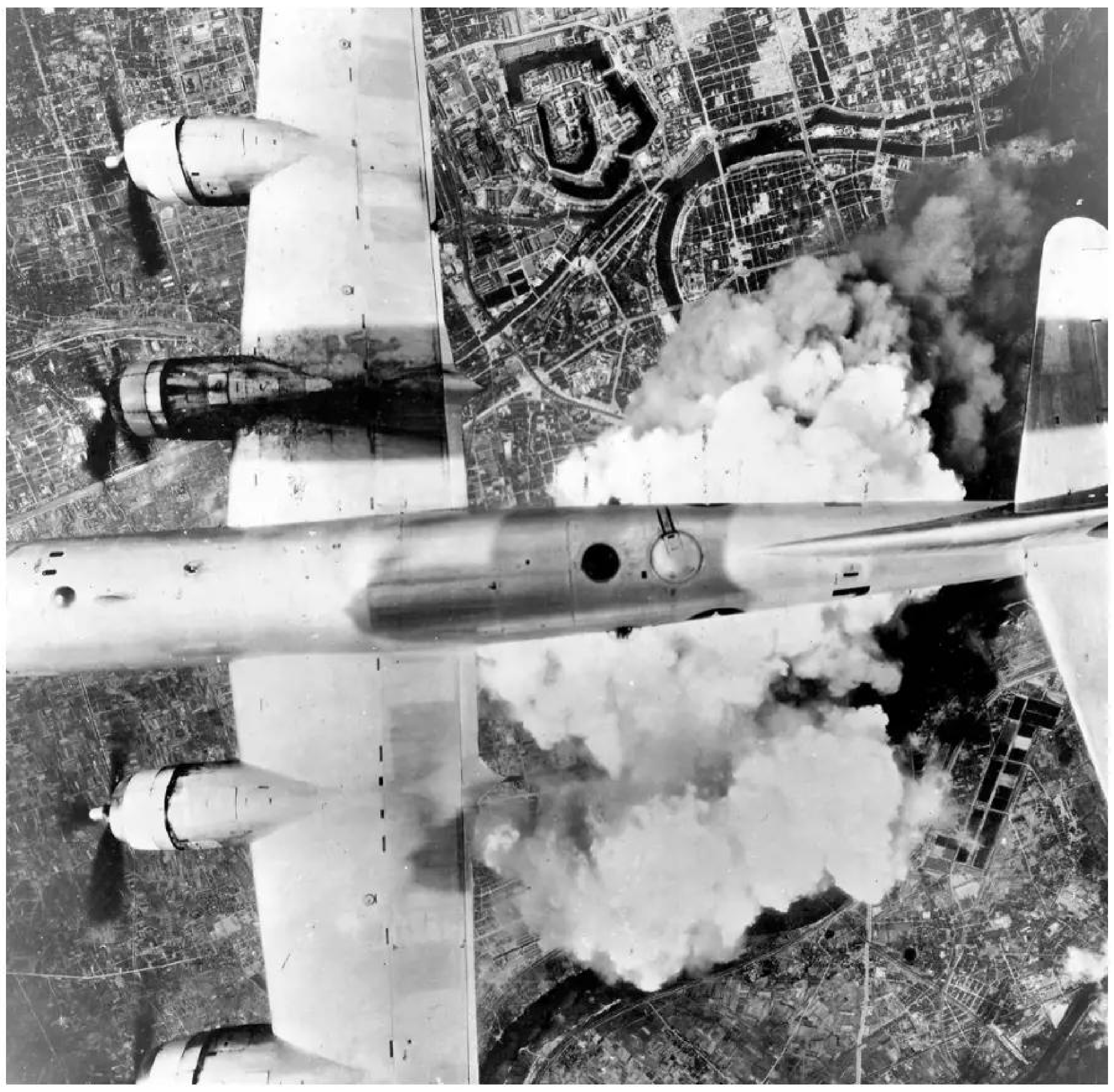
ACROSS THE PACIFIC

Following Pearl Harbor, the Japanese forces pressed ahead with the occupation of a huge area of the Pacific. The Allied forces aimed to contain the Japanese, keep supply lines open and counterattack with amphibious forces. Following the Battle of the Coral Sea, the Battle of Midway became a pivotal moment and caused serious damage to Japanese forces and morale. The Battle of Guadalcanal was six months of attack and counterattack with losses on both sides. Eventually, the US Army and Marines won through, and the American and Australian forces began to retake territory.

1943-45

THE END IS NIGH

After Guadalcanal, Japan realised it was on the defensive, its forces stretched. Rabaul was encircled and neutralised. Japan's eastern flank was vulnerable. With the fall of Saipan in the Marianas, bombers could reach Japan itself. Guam was to follow, and then Tinian, the base of the Enola Gay. Iwo Jima was small but significant, and one of the hardest-fought battles of the campaign, but it was secured. The invasion of Okinawa was the largest amphibious landing of the entire Pacific war. Japanese cities were now being firebombed on a regular basis. The defeat of Japan from the air seemed possible. It was to take the destruction of Hiroshima and Nagasaki by a terrifying new weapon for Japan to accept it was beaten.



> " There weren't the atomic bombs to drop. The US only had two more "

defence was a non-starter. Japan fully realised that [the US] were building an invasion force. We were doing an island-hopping campaign, and we were bringing to bear hundreds of thousands of troops that were going to be invading the home islands in just a short period of time, and Kyushu was the next target.

What would have happened next?

Had we invaded Kyushu, the US military did estimates of how long it would take, what the resistance would be and also the American casualties that would result from the invasion and occupation of Kyushu. And, essentially, 50,000 Americans would likely have died just to take Kyushu. Hundreds of thousands of Japanese would have died in that. Then what would have likely happened after that is the brute force conquest, island by island, of the four islands, where Honshu would probably have been next, where Tokyo is and so forth. There has been speculation ever since we dropped the bomb of what the American casualties would have been to take Honshu, and the numbers that are bandied about are like a half million Americans dead. But that's more of a guesstimate than an actual estimate because the detailed planning for taking Honshu had not happened yet.

Would the US have dropped more atomic bombs?

Well, we only had two more, so we had a limited stockpile. We only were going to have two more bombs by December 1945. People who don't know the historical details of the case would just naturally assume, 'Oh, America could drop dozens or hundreds of atomic bombs on Japan.' In fact, American opinion polls at the time when Japan surrendered [showed] that 22 or 25 per cent of Americans wanted us to keep bombing using the atomic bombs even after Japan surrendered because we were pretty angry about Pearl Harbor. But there weren't the bombs to drop. There were two more, but it would have taken many months here to produce a large number of atomic bombs. And we had already destroyed most of the cities anyway. So, by the time we dropped the atomic bombs, half of the cities' urban areas had already been completely erased and obliterated by firebombings.

Would there have been a race to conquer Japan between the Soviet Union and the US, similar to the race to Berlin in Germany?

A slower race, yeah. Just as we are doing amphibious landings on the

PEACE
210241

TOP LEFT
The US planned to conquer Japan island by island

BOTTOM LEFT
General Anami was part of a coup to overthrow the Emperor

ABOVE
News of Japan's surrender was celebrated across Europe

home islands, the Soviets would be in a position of taking control of large parts of the Japanese-controlled mainland and then do their own amphibious landings as well. It would've been a months-long slogging campaign, six to eight months at a minimum, to move through those four home islands. And that would've been true for either the American side or the Soviet side. And it's something that would have been a massive undertaking because amphibious operations are just fantastically difficult to do. The USA had to do one giant amphibious operation in Europe: that was in Normandy at Omaha Beach. The Japanese theatre is a whole series of amphibious operation after amphibious operation.

Would we have seen a divided Japan like we saw a divided Germany?

It's possible. The risk of direct conflict between the United States and the Soviet Union would have been much more direct, given that the Soviets would have to do amphibious operations, and the US would have a very significant navy and naval blockade of Japan. What we would be doing as we're taking Kyushu is we would be tightening the blockade around the four home islands even tighter. And that would not only prevent any access to shipping into Japan, but it would also directly impede any possible amphibious operation by the Soviets. So I think that what you would have seen is, unlike what's happening in the race to Berlin [at] the middle of Germany, where there's no possibility of Americans shooting Soviets, I think the risk here of a confrontation with the Soviets is much more real. So rather than a divided Japan like you saw a divided West Germany and East Germany, I think it's more that there could have been more direct confrontation with the Soviets.

What impact would this have had on Europe?

After the surrender of Japan, the United States could refocus a lot of its efforts on Europe, which is what we did. However, had we not, had we had to have that brute force island-by-island conquest of Japan, that would have created a real tension between dealing with Japan and then shifting over to Europe. It would have kept our focus on the Far East, and it would've done that for many months, if not several years. I think that you would have had much less economic focus on Western Europe. I think this would have put at risk the Marshall Plan. It would have opened the door to much more Soviet influence in Western Europe than actually occurred. Even the whole idea that NATO would have come together in 1949... it just raises lots of questions about whether that would have actually happened. That whole giant effort to forcibly conquer the Japanese home islands would have had some pretty big reverberations in terms of the history of Europe.

THE POSSIBILITY

1945-46

ISLAND HOPPING

The dropping of the atomic bombs was the ultimate in sending a message of power to the enemy. However, there were no stockpiles of atomic bombs waiting to be used: two, at least for the time being, was it. Had Japan not surrendered, a ground invasion would have been put into operation. Except it was not just one piece of ground to invade and hold, it was four main islands making up the core of Japan. Amphibious landings, against an enemy, dug into defences, were hard enough. But the race was on with an ally as to who would get there first.

1945

FIGHTING OVER THE SCRAPS

Having revoked its neutrality pact with Japan, Russia could now regard itself as an open player in the Far East. Although allies of the US in Europe against Hitler, Stalin may now feel it possible to make some gains on his eastern flank. With the US conducting amphibious landings from the east, and the Russians invading from the north and west, the potential for a misunderstanding, or even intentional engagement between the two forces would increase. In defeat, Japan could become a battleground – military or political – between two powers eager to secure their influence in the region and gain essential global kudos over their rival.

1945 ONWARDS

EUROPE COMES SECOND

A prolonged war against Japan would have had a significant impact on the resources and manpower of the Allies. By keeping troops in the field for longer, the drains on domestic finances would have become substantial. Also, with a financially costly land assault on the Japanese mainland inevitable, any support given by the US to the aftermath of the war in Europe would have been minimal, as would a continued US presence there. The Soviet Union, however, may decide not to become too embroiled in the execution of Japan's defeat, choosing instead to focus on Europe and what it could gain, materially and influentially, without the overarching impact of the US in its way.

И ЗАСУХУ ПОБЕДИМ!
КАРТА

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What if...

THE ALLIES HAD LOST WWII?

Imagine if Hitler succeeded with his dream of turning Europe into a single Nazi superpower...

INTERVIEW WITH

© Anne de Henning

Timothy W Ryback

Timothy is the internationally acclaimed author of *Hitler's Private Library*, with his most recent book, *TAKEOVER: Hitler's Final Rise To Power*, published in March 2024. His books have appeared in more than 40 editions around the world.

In 1940, Britain and France tasted defeat – and retreat – at the hands of the Nazi war machine at Dunkirk. By 1944, with the Allied forces boosted by the US and other nations, D-Day was to signal the beginning of the end for Hitler. But events could have been very different. A second pact with Russia would have released vital Nazi troops and armour to reinforce and repel the Normandy landings. Hitler may have decided to pursue the development and use of 'dirty' radioactive shells or even a Nazi atomic bomb. The tens of thousands of Allied troops may never have got off the beaches. With Hitler as the master of Europe, what would happen next?

What could have happened differently in order to bring about an Allied defeat?

Following the German defeats at El Alamein in late 1942, Stalingrad in early 1943, and the Allied landings at Normandy in June 1944, the most credible scenario for a Hitler victory would have been a nuclear device similar to the atomic bomb dropped by the Americans on Hiroshima. Strategically, the most probable target for Hitler would have been Moscow or a major East Coast city in the United States.

By then, Hitler possessed the long-range capacity to deliver such a bomb as far as New York City. He had three prototypes of an enhanced Messerschmitt Me 264 that had been developed as part of an Amerikabomber programme. There was also a two-stage V-2 rocket in development that could have essentially functioned as an intercontinental ballistic missile. A surviving blueprint for a Uranbombe, or Uranian Bomb, from the German nuclear programme, shows a device with a plutonium core.

There has been much debate as to how close German physicists were to making an atomic bomb. It is clear that German physicists were years behind the Americans in terms of development. Less certain is whether this was due to a lack of competency on the part of German physicists or whether it involved intentional efforts to keep a nuclear device out of Hitler's hands. After the war, Werner Heisenberg claimed to have intentionally sought to slow-foot the development of German nuclear capacity during a meeting with Hitler. "I did not want the Führer to get so interested that he would order great efforts immediately to make the atomic bomb," he said.

What would have been Hitler's and Japan's next move?

Hitler's first move following a German victory in Europe would have been the eradication of any future threat by Soviet Bolshevism. Along with his ranting about alleged Jewish conspiracies, Hitler saw communism as an epochal threat and claimed that without Operation Barbarossa, his invasion of the Soviet Union in June 1941, "the fate of Europe and its thousands of years of civilisation would have found its end". Depending on post-war German relations with Britain and the US, Hitler may have enlisted the former adversaries in a joint effort to crush the Red Army, an idea entertained by both sides. Hitler would have, in any event, sought to eliminate the Soviet Union as a political or military threat and to eradicate communism as an ideology.

Baumhängen als Strafverschärfung im KZ

© Alamy, Getty Images

RIGHT
The Slavic people would have suffered terribly under a dominant Nazi State

Arabian Desert
Hadiyah
Medina
Riyadh
SAUDI ARABIA
Yanbu
RED SEA
Kumda
Jizan
Sa'dah
Port Sudan
Nubian Desert
Halfa
Mesewa
ERITREA

As for Japan? It's fair to say that Germany and Japan were uneasy allies at best. It was an axis of evil unlikely to endure. Hitler faulted Japan for not opening a front against the Soviet Union in the Far East, which would have forced Moscow into a two-front war and relieved pressure on Germany's Eastern Front. There would ultimately have been territorial disputes between the two countries, as evidenced at a Yalta-style conference in July 1942, at which plans were discussed for dividing the post-war world between the German and Japanese empires. When the Japanese proposed a demarcation line along the 70th longitude, basically ceding most of the Indian subcontinent to Japan, the Germans baulked.

German and Japanese ambitions would have competed and inevitably collided. Let antecedent serve as evidence. The Ribbentrop-Molotov Pact provided for the joint German-Soviet invasion of Poland in August 1939. In less than two years, Germany was at war with Russia.

If the Allies had lost, how different would Europe have looked, both geographically and politically?

A major campaign promise of Hitler during his rise to power was the dismantling of the terms of the Treaty of Versailles. Germany would have been restored to its pre-Versailles borders, with additional territories annexed in Eastern Europe for further expansion and settlement by ethnic Germans to meet Hitler's policy goal of more Lebensraum, or living space, for the German people.

Most countries in Western Europe would have continued to function exactly as they did when under Nazi occupation, with puppet governments subservient to the dictates of the Reich. However, much of Eastern Europe would have been transformed into administrative regions, on the model of Poland, which ceased to exist as a country and was ruled as 'General Government'.

Germany would have come to occupy the territorial boundaries framed in the 19th-century nationalistic anthem, 'Deutschland, Deutschland über alles', along with additional annexed lands. This would mean that the reconstituted German Reich would have dwarfed every other country on the continent.

BELOW There was no obvious successor after Hitler following a Nazi victory

How would different ethnic and religious groups have been affected?

In the novel *Fatherland*, Robert Harris provides a chillingly credible account of the fate of the Jewish population in Europe if Hitler had triumphed in World War II. The Holocaust would have been completed. The physical evidence would have been eradicated. The memory would have been erased from human memory.

A similar fate would have befallen the Roma communities across Europe. There may have been a degree of demographic engineering through eugenics programmes, as with the Lebensborn children who were bred as pure Aryans, but for the most part, the populations of Western European countries would not have changed significantly. In contrast, the Slavic peoples of Eastern Europe, whom Hitler classified as Untermenschen, or members of an inferior race, would have been subjugated to serve the German master race.

Religious groups, especially Roman Catholics, would have come under increasing persecution. Hitler felt that religion provided important moral support for many people in times of travail and peril. Hitler himself was Catholic but fully intended to leave the church in a public manner after the war. "This act was to have symbolic value for the world," Hitler's private secretary, Christa Schröder, recalls him telling her. "For Germany, it was intended to represent the end of a historical epoch and for the Third Reich, the beginning of a new era."

What kind of concessions could the Allies have tried to negotiate when faced with defeat?

As I show in my book, *TAKEOVER: Hitler's Final Rise To Power*, Hitler was a scorched-earth political leader. With nuclear capacity, he would have accepted nothing short of unconditional surrender from the Allies. And his terms would have been brutal. His policies in the east would have reflected those that the Morgenthau

THE PAST

1939-1940

TWO-FACED DIPLOMACY

Following Hitler's appeasement by the British government, he is free to begin his annexation of territory unchallenged. Poland becomes the eventual line in the sand for the Allies, but Hitler is bolstered by his non-aggression pact with Stalin and ignores them anyway. Despite all efforts to the contrary, Prime Minister Chamberlain has no choice but to declare war on Germany. The British Expeditionary Force supports its French allies but is poorly supplied and overstretched. The retreat to Dunkirk under the weight of German forces leaves the Nazis in full control of the continent.

1941

STEPPING FROM THE SHADOWS

The USA had followed a policy of Lend-Lease to supply the Allies without officially entering the war. With the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, that option faded and with Hitler's declaration of war on the US in December, the decision was made. Fighting in the Pacific is long and hard-won as the US gradually gains victories and territory, edging ever closer to the Japanese mainland. In Europe, it is a battle of the air and the sea, of intelligence and covert operations, all the while planning and preparing for the time when Allied boots will once again step onto French soil.

1944-45

THE LONG ROAD TO THE END

The D-Day landings of June 1944 trigger the liberation of Europe from Nazi control. By August, Paris is free. December sees the last German offensive on the Western Front – the Battle of the Bulge – but by January, the Germans are in retreat. In February, Churchill, Roosevelt, and Stalin meet at Yalta. The Soviets are given Eastern Europe. By April, with Allied forces advancing from the west and Russians encircling Berlin, Hitler poisons his mistress Eva Braun and shoots himself. Their bodies are burned. On 7 May 1945, General Dwight Eisenhower accepts Germany's unconditional surrender. At midnight, 8 May 1945, the war in Europe is officially over.

© Alamy

Plan proposed for Germany – a region stripped of industrial capacity and real political autonomy, with a people who were reduced to basic agrarian life at a subsistence-level existence.

As has already been mentioned, if there had been a negotiated end to the war, Hitler could have appealed to the British – and possibly the Americans – to join forces for the purpose of confronting and driving back the Red Army forces from central Europe. It was an idea that was embraced and advocated by General Patton, who had great respect for German military capacities.

Hitler would certainly have welcomed the opportunity to cooperate with the British as an imperial power and colonial ruler. He saw the British Empire as a model for the exercise of colonial power, especially in the brutality with which it suppressed insurrections and exploited the natural resources and physical labour of colonialised peoples. Beyond reclaiming former German colonies in Africa, which were lost after World War I, Hitler could have sought to negotiate the expansion of the German colonial presence by annexing holdings of other European colonial powers, especially when it came to the regions that were rich in resources.

How would the global balance of power, relationship and reputation of the Allies be changed, and do you think that World War III would have been inevitable?

In keeping with that age-old verity, history is written by the victor – the reputations and legacies of the individual Allied nations would be dependent on their relationship to the German Reich and Hitler's personal proclivities and whims. The Soviet Union would be a ravaged and brutalised rump state most likely relegated to lands beyond the Urals. The 'Free France' of Charles de Gaulle would vanish in oblivion with the fascist French state of Marshal Petain representing the French. The United States would have been held singularly responsible for driving the Europeans into war with one another. World War II would then come to be remembered as 'Roosevelt's war'.

Great Britain may well have fared better. As already mentioned, Hitler saw the British nation as a natural ally and the British Empire as a model for world domination. It is easy to imagine a parsing and parcelling of colonial holdings and their respective resources among these two global powers.

As for a third world war? If anything, there would most likely be a German civil war that would result from a succession for power following Hitler's eventual death, possibly a battle between Waffen-SS divisions and Wehrmacht regulars, in a struggle for power between competing political and military interests. Hitler nurtured no real successor. Indeed, he fostered rivalries and competition among his top lieutenants, and alienated much of the professional military. The fissures became evident in the final days before Hitler's suicide in April 1945, when senior Hitler lieutenants, most prominently Hermann Göring and Heinrich Himmler, scrambled about trying to secure a successor role even as the Third Reich was collapsing in ruin.

BELOW
With Hitler dead the Germans signed an unconditional surrender

THE POSSIBILITY

1945 ONWARDS

SINGLE-STATE SOLUTION

Having kept any counteroffensive by the Allies at bay, Hitler would be able to realise his vision of a much larger German empire, both in Europe and across the world. Colonies of conquered France and Belgium would yield their wealth of resources, helping to support a single Nazi State. To consolidate his political position, Hitler may even look to the empire he admired the most – the British – to enter into some form of dialogue around trade. Although some nations may still retain their name, they would be mere puppets of the Nazi regime, with assemblies and officials picked and controlled by the Reich.

1945-50

SLAUGHTER OF THE SLAVS

With free rein, Hitler would impose the harshest treatment possible on the Slavic peoples of Eastern Europe and Russia, even to the point of extinction. By regarding them as less than human, Hitler would wipe them from the face of the Earth and reduce the might of Russia. His unopposed oppression of an entire people would stamp his own brand of stability against insurrection while, at the same time, plundering the mineral and agricultural wealth of the land to feed the needs of his new Nazi idyll.

1945 ONWARDS

FRACTURE OF THE FATHERLAND

A supreme Nazi state with almost messianic propaganda centred on himself, Hitler had done very little regarding what might come after him. The very future of its dominance in Europe, like any nation, would depend on its ability to adapt and survive change. When Hitler dies, the real test as to how deep his influence had penetrated into the lives and souls of the German people would begin. Having continually used division and uncertainty to control those around him, a natural successor would not be clear. If given the opportunity, differing political factions would rise to the surface and turn on each other. The result: civil war and the break-up of the Reich – something the Allies had failed to do.

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WHAT IF CHURCHILL WON THE 1945 ELECTION?

With the Conservative party in power for another term, how would they have shaped post-war Britain?

INTERVIEW WITH

Image source: wiki/ Mick Kavanagh

Anthony Tucker-Jones

Former intelligence officer Anthony Tucker-Jones is a military historian whose works include *Operation Dragoon: The Invasion Of Southern France 1944* and *Kursk 1943: Hitler's Bitter Harvest*. He's currently working on his next book, *Churchill Master And Commander: Winston Churchill At War 1895-1945.*

What was the immediate backdrop and run-up to the election?

The July 1945 election was the result of an agreement between the ruling coalition that once victory had been achieved in Europe [towards the end of the Second World War], a general election would be called. Winston Churchill wanted to stay in office until Japan was defeated but was obliged to step down as prime minister beforehand. By this time, the country was very war-fatigued. We'd been at war since September 1939, and Churchill had been prime minister since May 1940. The general feeling was one of relief but also hope that maybe now there could be a new start. There hadn't been an election for some time, and people felt that the time was right.

RIGHT
Labour leader Clement Attlee

What was this run-up like for Winston Churchill himself?

Churchill was undoubtedly quite exhausted by this stage. He'd been running the war both as prime minister and as defence minister, a post he'd assigned himself. So not only had he overseen the running of the country, but he'd also supervised the conduct of the war, including defence industries, strategy and diplomatic relations. He'd also travelled an inordinate amount. He'd been around the world to conferences in Quebec, Washington DC, Casablanca and numerous other places. He wasn't a young man, his health wasn't great, and he was tired by the time the war ended in Europe. I'm sure he felt triumphant, but I think if he'd had the option, he certainly wouldn't have fought a general election. It was probably the last thing on his mind and that of the Conservatives.

What were the characteristics of both sides' campaigns?

Clement Attlee and the Labour Party were a lot better prepared than Churchill and the Conservatives. In 1942, Labour brought out the Beveridge Report, which looked at their proposed post-war policies. Therefore, they had given a lot more thought to what would appeal to the electorate than the Tories had. Churchill and the Conservatives, on the other hand, were relying mainly on his wartime performance. Churchill was enormously popular, a highly gifted public orator and had led us skilfully during the war. There was a general feeling that the Tories and Churchill could trade on this, and consequently, they didn't do maybe as much groundwork as they should have done. After all, they were facing a parliamentary election and not a presidential one, so people weren't voting specifically for Churchill but for the Conservative Party as a whole.

The Labour Party won the election by a landslide. Why was this?

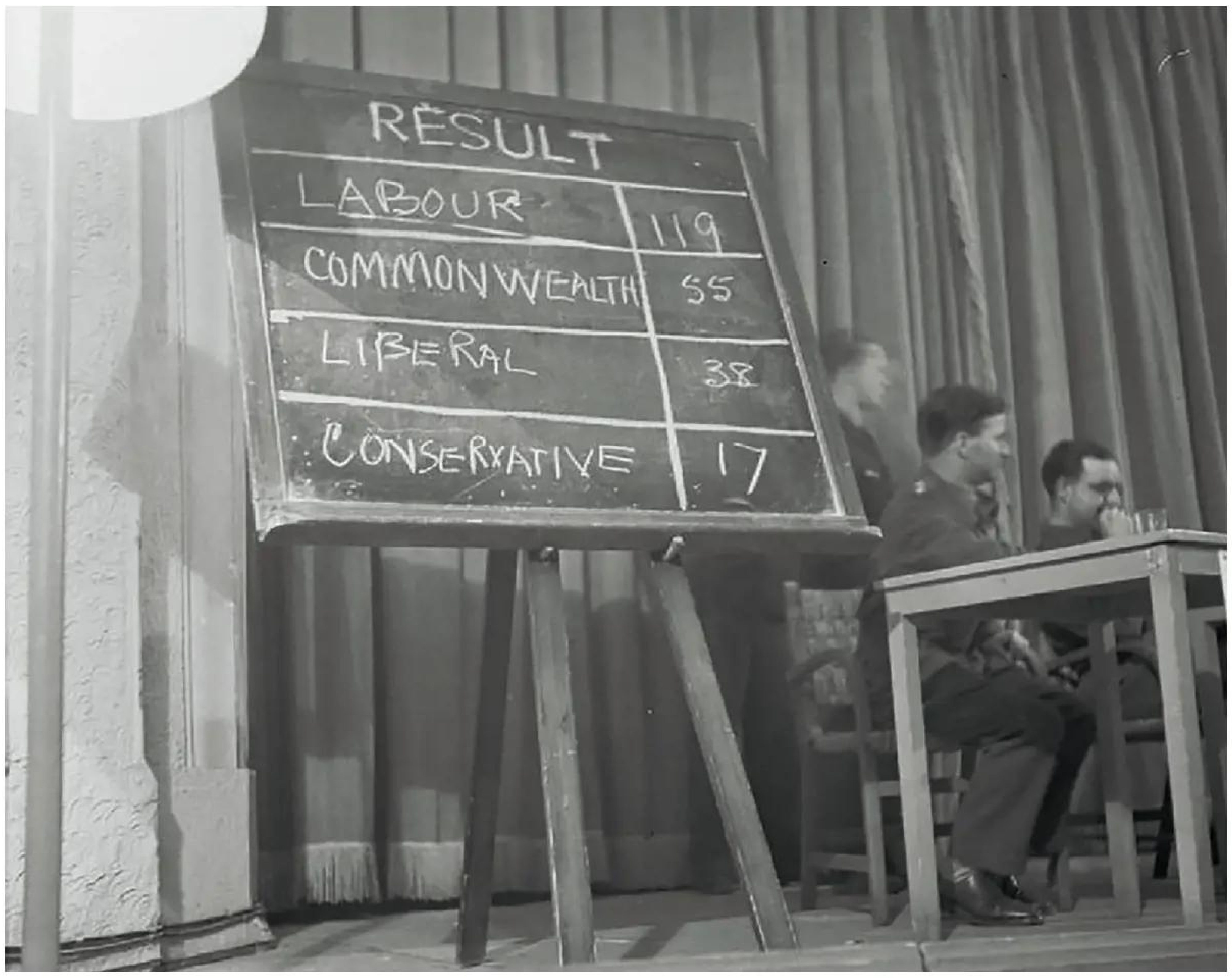
Labour's landslide victory came as a shock to Churchill and the Tories. Churchill is on record as having worries that troops returning from overseas might vote against him, but nothing on the scale of what occurred. The key thing Labour had was well-thought-out policies that appealed to people desperate for a new start. The Tories had a lot of baggage from the 1930s when the economy had not been that successful, and people remembered those pre-war days. Labour, on the other hand, were offering universal education, a family allowance, the setting up of the welfare state and a publicly funded health service. All of these things appealed to the electorate. The general feeling of the country was that it wanted a change, and obviously, that was reflected in Labour winning almost double the seats that the Conservatives did.

What were the consequences of this?

During and immediately after the election, Churchill found himself in a rather odd situation. While the election was ongoing, he went to Potsdam for a conference with the Russians and Americans on the future of Europe and the Far East once Japan had been defeated. Of course, Churchill took his deputy prime minister with him, who was Clement Attlee, the Labour Party leader. So there Churchill is holding these high-powered talks, and all the while, in

Interview by Jonathan O'Callaghan. Images: Getty Images

CONFIRM YOUR CONFIDENCE IN CHURCHILL
X
PUT IT THERE !



> "Churchill was very, very pro-empire and was loath to see India go"

LEFT
A mock election held by British troops in Cairo

BELOW
Winston Churchill's passionate campaigning in 1945 was to no avail

OPOSITE
A British soldier stationed in the Middle East casts his postal vote

the back of his mind, there's the chance that he's not going to be prime minister once they've finished. However, long before he lost the election, he had given his support to the Americans that he would back the dropping of atomic weapons on Japan. In fact, he called them the "Miracle of Deliverance". Although that didn't happen on his watch, he did support the idea, and there wasn't much Labour could do as the bombing occurred immediately after the election had taken place. However, they did ensure that British armed forces were demobilised fairly quickly. But I think for Churchill, the general feeling was sympathy for him, at home and abroad. There was a sense of shock that the country had thanked him for his outstanding premiership by essentially sacking him! I think a lot of people felt sorry for him. However, it is important to remember that Churchill himself carried a lot of political baggage. Throughout his career, he'd held most of the high offices, and people remembered him for positions such as chancellor of the exchequer, where he'd not done particularly well. In a way, his emergency wartime premiership was something completely different to his previous political career, though the latter had prepared him for that decisive moment in 1940 when he became prime minister.

What could the immediate effect have been if the Conservatives had won the 1945 election?

If Churchill had won the general election, there are three key things that he would have certainly had an immediate impact on. The first of these is Indian independence: Churchill was very, very pro-empire and was loath to see India go. I think if he'd remained prime minister, the outcome would have ultimately been the same, but certainly, the negotiations could have gone very differently. Then, of course, he would have almost certainly had an impact on the opening stages of the Cold War. The Allies fell out fairly quickly with Stalin and the Soviet Union, and that led to a stand-off over Allied-occupied West Berlin. This was slap-bang in the middle of East Germany and was reliant on Soviet good faith for communications, air corridors, etc into those parts occupied by the Western Allies. For a while, the Soviets

Images: Getty Images, Alamy, Wiki Commons

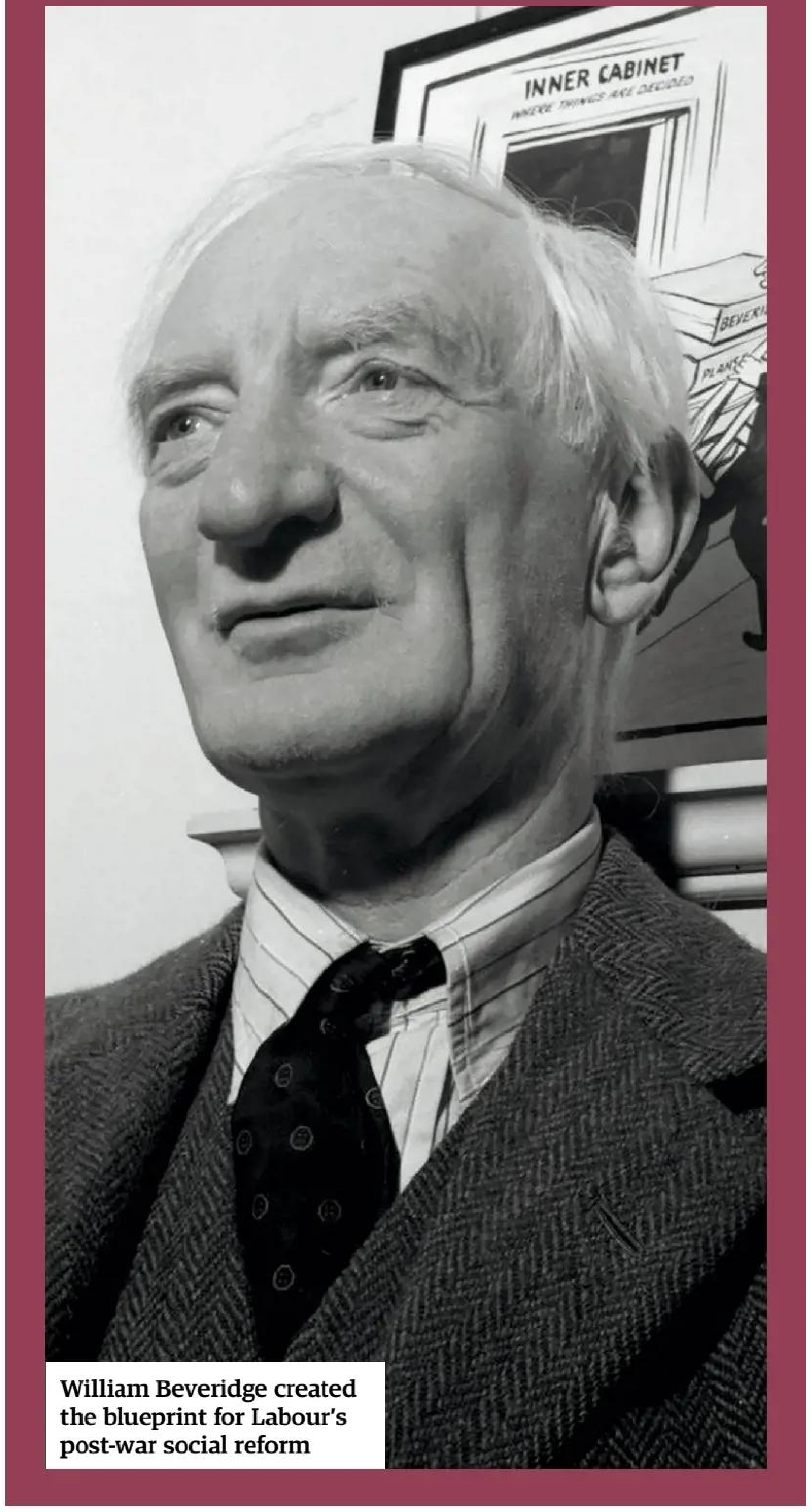
closed these off, and we ended up with first the blockade and then the dramatic Berlin airlift. If Churchill had been in office, he would most likely have tried to reach out to Stalin. He always believed they had a close relationship and that he could influence the Soviet leader. Lastly, of course, there was the Korean War. If Churchill had been in office in 1950 when that war broke out, it's quite conceivable that he would have committed more troops than Labour did. The UK sent a brigade as part of the UN mandate to force the North out of the South, but it would have been interesting to see whether or not Churchill would have decided to commit more troops than the Labour government.

What could some of the wider implications have been, later into the 20th century, of a Tory victory?

In terms of the Labour victory in 1945, certainly looking at it in the cold light of today, the most important thing they did was set up the National Health Service. This has long been held up as an enormous success and the jewel in the crown of British institutions. Most countries have varying forms of private healthcare, but crucially, the NHS is free at the point of delivery. Would that have happened under Churchill? Well, certainly, it wouldn't be in its current form. Some sort of state-funded health service would have been required, but would it be in the size it is today? I don't know. I think, probably, that's the most fundamental thing. Long-term, the election made Labour a viable political party, which it had not been up to that point. It had been in power but only with minority governments. Suddenly, that landslide victory signalled they were a party to be reckoned with, and it sowed the seeds for what we have today, which is effectively a two-party parliamentary system. The only viable parties that can form governments are the Conservative and the Labour parties. It also signalled pretty much the end of the Liberals. For a long time, it had been the Tories and the Liberals that could form governments, and that came to an end. They were delivered a blow that they never recovered from. Ironically, Churchill had, during his long career, sat on the Liberal benches in the House of Commons, and it was his resounding defeat that sounded their political death knell. It was an outcome that would have made David Lloyd George, the last Liberal prime minister, turn in his grave!

The social reform guru

The main reason for Labour's landslide victory in the post-war general election is down to its groundbreaking policies of social reform, outlined in 1942's *Social Insurance And Allied Services*, better known as the *Beveridge Report*. The report was so widely published that it actually became a bestseller. Created by liberal economist William Beveridge, it proposed widespread social reform to combat what he termed the "Five Giants" on the road to reconstruction. These giants were "Want, Disease, Ignorance, Squalor and Idleness". In his report, Beveridge described a "cradle to grave" approach to social reform after his pre-war work for a charitable organisation convinced him that only through such reform could poverty and social inequality be eradicated. The Acts that the Labour government introduced to try to achieve this were the Family Allowances Act (1945), the National Insurance Act (1946), the National Health Service Act (1946), the Pensions Increase Act (1947) and the Landlord And Tenant Rent Control Act (1949).



William Beveridge created the blueprint for Labour's post-war social reform

What if...

THE CHINESE COMMUNISTS HAD LOST?

The communist takeover of China in 1949 helped shape the Cold War and the modern world, but what if they'd lost?

INTERVIEW WITH

© Elizabeth J Perry

Elizabeth J Perry

Elizabeth J Perry is the Henry Rosovsky professor of Government at Harvard University. Among her works are *Mao's Invisible Hand: The Political Foundations Of Adaptive Government In China* and her co-edited volume *Ruling By Other Means: State-Mobilized Movements.*

What was the situation in China leading up to the communist takeover in 1949?

China, on the eve of the communist takeover, was in terrible shape. The ruling KMT [Nationalist Party] government had descended into corruption on many levels, and there was galloping inflation. China, of course, had been very hard hit by the Japanese invasion that began in the late 1930s. That had ended only in 1945, and so it was still a war-torn country, impoverished, with tremendous inequality, political disorder and poor public health. There was a great deal of unhappiness on the part of many different sectors of the population with respect to the KMT regime. Initially, when the nationalists unified China in 1927-1928, there was considerable hope that they would really usher in a kind of new age for China. However, after the Japanese invasion, more and more people, including the intelligentsia as well as the peasantry, went over to the communist side for patriotic as well as pragmatic reasons. There was a realisation that the Nationalists were not fighting the Japanese or managing the economy effectively and that the country was in danger of permanently losing its sovereignty.

Who was Mao Zedong and the CCP?

Mao came from Hunan Province in the heartland of China and was born in what he later characterised as a rich peasant family. He was educated primarily in a traditional Chinese way with Chinese classics, which helps explain why he later became a very successful poet as well as an essayist. While working as a librarian at Peking University, he felt that he was looked down upon by the more elite Chinese intellectuals because he retained certain peasant-like traits. The primary co-founders of the Chinese Communist Party [CCP] were two other intellectuals active at Peking University at the same time. One was the director of the library, Li Dazhao, and the other was the dean, Chen Duxiu. Due in part to their invitation, Mao attended the founding of the party in 1921. His first assignment was to organise workers in his native Hunan Province, but he quickly realised that the peasantry, more than the workers, was going to have to be the main social force of revolution, and he became the head of the peasant bureau. Mao was not recognised as the paramount leader of the Chinese Communist Party until the Long March that took the communists out of their Jiangxi Soviet base all the way up to the northwest to Yan'an in Shaanxi Province. It was during this period (1930s-1940s) that Mao began to articulate what we think of as Maoism – a distinctive recipe for revolution focused on peasant mobilisation and guerrilla warfare against an overwhelming enemy.

Who exactly were their main opponents, the KMT?

The KMT, also known as the Nationalists, trace their roots back to activists in the 1911 revolution that brought down China's last imperial dynasty. The KMT established its capital in Nanjing in 1927 after defeating warlords who ruled China at the time. By this point, the head of the KMT was Chiang Kai-shek. In cooperation with members of secret societies in the industrial city of Shanghai, he brutally attacked the communist labour movement there in the spring of 1927. This was an

RIGHT A Chinese communist rally in 1932

Image sources: wiki/Flickr

Main image sources: wiki/The National Archives, 2x © Getty Images

What if…

THE CHINESE COMMUNISTS HAD LOST?

THE PAST

1949

COMMUNIST REVOLUTION

Following four years of civil war in China, the CCP took control. After the CCP's formation in 1921, the massacre of many of its members by the nationalists in 1927 and years of tenuous partnerships with those same groups, the nationalists were forced to flee. Following this, there were numerous executions as Mao asserted his authority.

1958-1960

THE GREAT LEAP FORWARD

A campaign launched in 1958 by Mao to bring industry to the countryside, which included, among other things, 'backyard furnaces' to help steel output. Misguided policies such as 'sparrowcide' (massacring all sparrows to protect crops, not taking into account the insects they eat) and a desire by local officials to complete quotas (collecting 'surpluses' that did not exist) led to widespread famine.

Image source: wiki/ Li Jiuling

1960

SINO-SOVIET SPLIT

Following the death of Stalin, Nikita Khrushchev led the Soviet Union. Due to tensions between himself and Chairman Mao, he withdrew all technical aid and support from China.

1966-1976

CULTURAL REVOLUTION

Following the Great Leap Forward, Mao stepped down from his position of power. However, in 1966, he called on the youth to rebel against capitalist and traditionalist movements in society – while simultaneously removing his enemies from within the CCP. Numerous intellectuals were tortured and killed, with the figures ranging anywhere from hundreds of thousands to 20 million.

Image source: wiki/Tsering Dorjee

ABOVE KMT troops leaving Canton following defeat

important turning point in the history of Chinese communism, causing the communists to move out of the cities into the countryside. So the KMT were opponents but also periodic allies of the Chinese communists, having jointly fought warlords in the 1920s and allying again during World War II to fight the Japanese. This second united front broke down toward the end of WWII, and after the Japanese withdrawal, the communists engaged in civil war against the nationalists from 1945 to 1949.

How did the CCP finally gain control?
It was a two-fold process. On the one hand, the Communist Party was gaining more and more territory in the countryside. The Long March had begun as a defeat. However, after the Japanese invaded, the communists began to develop a successful guerrilla warfare strategy and gained increasingly more territory. At the same time, the Japanese invasion helped to unravel the KMT. Corruption was rife in the KMT during World War II. Funds that were supposed to go toward fighting actually went into the pockets of various KMT leaders. By the end of World War II, the tables had turned, and the communists gained the upper hand. The communists were able to gain control because of the implosion of the KMT, which proved unable to control the economy and unite the different warring factions within the Nationalist Party. The Battle of Huai-hai in 1948 was a critical juncture, after which a number of soldiers defected from the KMT side and went over to the communist side.

What were some of the immediate effects of the communist takeover?
The communists carried out dramatic changes in the cities and countryside: land reform in the villages, socialisation of industry in the factories and thought reform in the universities. These were conducted as mass campaigns in which ordinary citizens were mobilised by the state to help implement its radical agenda. The campaigns were violent, with millions of landlords, rich peasants, KMT sympathisers, Japanese 'puppets', bandits, secret society members, sectarians and other 'enemies of the people' killed. But inflation was brought under control, and public order was largely restored through a series of draconian disciplinary measures. By the late 1950s, people were subject to a household registration system that severely limited mobility. Class labels were imposed to divide the population into 'good' classes, like peasants and workers, and 'bad' classes, like landlords

> " Millions of landlords, rich peasants and other 'enemies of the people' were killed "

and rich peasants. It was a very, very different society from what China had looked like before the revolution.

Were there any points when the communists could have failed?
Before the outbreak of World War II, very few people would have expected a communist takeover in China. Had Chiang Kai-shek managed to tame the factional struggles within the KMT or to curb the rampant inflation and corruption, things could have gone very differently. Had the Japanese not invaded, it would surely have been a very different timetable, if not an entirely different outcome. There was nothing preordained about the victory of the communist revolution from 1921, when the CCP was founded, until 1949, when it took over the mainland.

What could some of the effects for China have been had the communists been defeated?
Had the KMT managed to eliminate the communist threat during the civil war, you might have seen a somewhat less coercive government, simply by virtue of the fact it was less powerful than the communists. But my guess is what would have happened is China would have limped along for a very substantial period of time. We can look at Taiwan and say, "Oh well, because Chiang Kai-shek set up a very successful regime, he would have done the same on the mainland," but I think that's a very implausible comparison. Much of the reason the KMT was able to reform itself in Taiwan was precisely because it had just suffered such a disastrous defeat and had to reconsider everything. Had the KMT remained in power on the mainland, there would surely have been a lot of loss of life through neglect, disease, poverty, political disorder and so forth. However, you would likely not have seen the executions, nor a famine of the sort that occurred under Mao during the Great Leap Forward. When Mao broke with the Soviet Union and tried to apply his own guerrilla tactics to develop the countryside, China experienced the worst famine in all of history, with tens of millions dying of starvation. But you would probably have seen the continuation for many years of all of those problems that had existed before the communist revolution.

What could some of the effects have been globally had the communists not succeeded?
Had the communists not won, the Soviet Union would not have been China's closest ally in the 1950s. The Cold War would obviously have been very different had the US and China remained allies. But, surely, the Soviets would have aided remnant communists and other would-be revolutionaries seeking to take advantage of KMT weakness. So, it's hard to imagine that a communist loss in the civil war with the KMT would have ushered in a peaceful or stable situation.

ABOVE Mao Zedong declaring the birth of communist China

BELOW Leader of the KMT, Chiang Kai-shek

3x © Getty Images

THE POSSIBILITY

1949-1975

CHIANG KAI-SHEK AND TAIWAN

The leader of the KMT, Chiang Kai-shek, immediately moved the government to Taiwan, where he resumed his duties as president of the Republic of China. He consistently claimed sovereignty over all of China, as well as making preparations to retake the mainland. Kai-shek would finance insurgent groups and plan a full-scale invasion in 1962. While ruling Taiwan, he purged the party of what he saw as corrupt elements. In the 1950s, American aid and a land reform act led to the island becoming economically prosperous. This has led historians to wonder what the possible changes Kai-shek would have instigated had he been able to once again seize control of the mainland.

Image source: wiki/ Tayvanlı Asker ve Siyasetçi

1949-1997

HONG KONG

Until 1997, Hong Kong remained under the rule of the British. Large numbers of refugees from China fled from the mainland during the initial communist takeover in 1949, and further numbers fled following the Great Leap Forward and Cultural Revolution. Hong Kong's history is intertwined with its British rule – had the KMT been able to win the civil war, it is possible it would have been returned to Chinese rule earlier.

1950s & 1960s

RELATIONSHIP WITH THE USA DURING THE COLD WAR

Chinese relations with the USA throughout the period of the Cold War were initially tense, having a much closer bond with the Soviet Union. The Korean War, Taiwan Strait Crisis, Vietnam War and Chinese atomic tests were just some of the events which led to a steady escalation of tensions throughout the 1950s and 1960s. Although relations improved in the 1970s, due in part to the Sino-Soviet Split, these earlier aggressions greatly affected the nature of the Cold War, particularly when China became a nuclear power. Had the US allied more closely with a capitalist China, it is likely that the Cold War could have taken a vastly different path.

What if...

NATO HAD NOT BEEN FORMED?

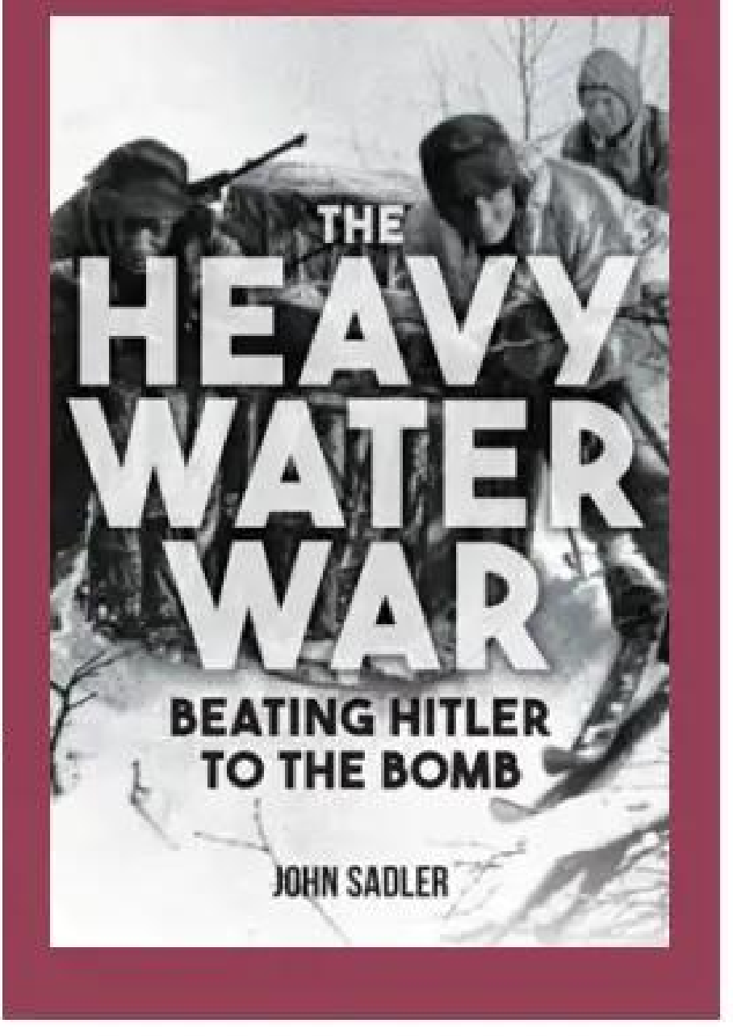
The USA pulls its troops, missiles and money back across the Atlantic

INTERVIEW WITH

© J Sadler

John Sadler

John is extensively published on WWII, including his recent book *The Heavy Water War*. He has taught at Newcastle University's Department of Lifelong Learning and takes tour groups around battlefields. He, jointly with Bev Palin, runs 'Time Bandits' a living history and reenactment group often to be seen in WWII guise.



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Was the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) a done deal from the start, or were there voices of domestic political opposition from the United States and Europe?

In March 1946, at Westminster College, Winston Churchill delivered his famous 'Iron Curtain' speech: "From Stettin in the Baltic to Trieste in the Adriatic an 'Iron Curtain' has descended across the continent." He wasn't wrong.

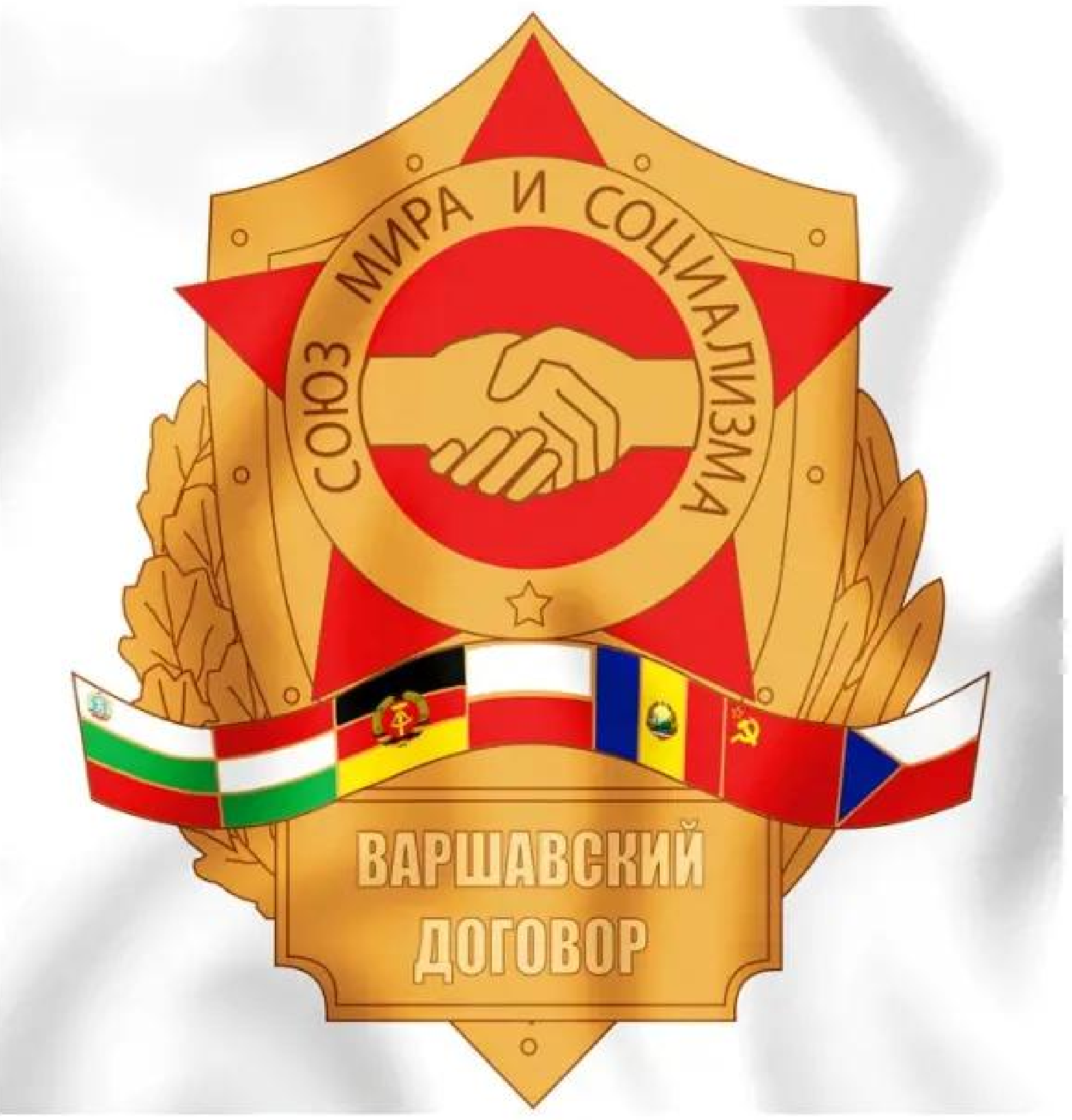
It was against this backdrop, following the defeat of Nazi Germany and the partitioning of the defeated lands by the victors, it is fair to say most in the US and the UK were content, indeed relieved, to see the formation and role of the Organisation. Many protest groups did not. Although not formed until the latter years of the 1950s, the Campaign For Nuclear Disarmament reflected a mood amongst some ordinary citizens of the fear of nuclear destruction and the mistrust of politicians to keep them safe.

A strong faction within Europe and Britain failed to recognise the USSR as an active threat, preferring appeasement, even rapprochement – even after the merciless crushing of Hungary in 1956.

With no NATO in place, how might US and European policies have shifted?

The risk, clearly from a purely US standpoint, might have been a return to pre-war isolationism, a trend that President-Elect Donald Trump might lean towards [in his second term as US president]. The current [and soon-to-be former] occupant of the White House, Joe Biden, expressed a more pithily committed view: "America's commitment to collective defence under Article 5 of NATO is a sacred obligation, not just for now but for all time." Nonetheless, had it been the case that European partners after 1945 had no appetite for a collective stand against the USSR's aggression, there is no saying that the US might have taken a wider worldview and relegated the defence of Europe to a secondary position, preferring to look, say, at the Pacific Rim, Middle East or Africa.

The Cold War is a battle that never was, but yet it could so easily have flared during a whole row of collateral conflicts. Not least of these was, and indeed is, the Arab/Israeli situation. From 1948 onwards, US and Israeli interests coincided whilst the USSR embraced [Gamal Abdel] Nasser in Egypt. 'Substitute' conflicts by the superpowers of the then Soviet Union and the US are nothing new and even continue today in various parts of the world. They are that time-worn mix of ideology, ambition and influence that both sides play to suit their own ends and further their own agendas. Sometimes, the distance between the two big hitters comes perilously close, as in the potential involvement of NATO forces in the current conflict in Ukraine. All it takes is for one NATO member to be attacked, and the mechanisms of the whole alliance come into play.



What could the Soviet Union have been tempted or attempted to do?

Between 1948 and 1949, Stalin attempted to eliminate the free world enclave of West Berlin, buried inside Soviet-controlled East Germany, linked only by a narrow land umbilical that Russia could and did sever, leaving the city's inhabitants at the risk of mass starvation. Stalin had form here – ask any Ukrainian today. Nonetheless, NATO responded with the famed Berlin Airlift, a Sisyphean task whereby Western planes kept the city supplied and defied the Soviet blockade. Such an effort stunned even Stalin, and eventually, [he] was forced to admit defeat. This was a battle, not a shooting match, but a conflict of ideologies and logistics that could easily have escalated. It was a clear victory and thorough vindication for NATO.

This reverse taught the USSR that, firstly, NATO was serious, and secondly, that the Organisation was in for the long term. Stalin had initially thought otherwise and that much of the rump of a free Europe could be subsumed beneath the red banner. Not only did NATO show steely resolve but demonstrated, in the most vivid manner, its power, superb logistics and US commitment to

FAR RIGHT
The US flag may have been markedly absent

RIGHT
The Warsaw Pact would cement Soviet ideology in Eastern Europe

Interview by David J Williamson. **Main image source:** © Alamy, © Getty Images

THE PAST

1948 – 49

AIRBORNE AID

Following the success of the communist party in Czechoslovakia, Josef Stalin tested the resolve of the Western allies. Berlin had been carved in two as part of the post-war agreement. Although sitting in Soviet-controlled East Germany, West Berlin was controlled by the US, UK and France. Stalin blockaded West Berlin so that no land supplies could reach the city. Such a face-off between the US and the Soviet Union could have had dire consequences. But the solution lay in a massive airlift in and out of West Berlin. It was a huge effort that lasted almost a year. Stalin made his point, and the Allies knew a military alliance with the USA was essential.

1949

HANDS ACROSS THE OCEAN

NORTH ATLANTIC PACT

In 1948, several European countries signed the Brussels Treaty as a military alliance and collective response to growing tensions and fears of potential security issues in post-war Europe. In the US, the 'Vandenburg Resolution' triggered negotiations with European countries that had a North Atlantic coastline to create the North Atlantic Treaty. The Treaty was signed in 1949, and it committed its signatories to a mutual defence of their nations – should any one of them be attacked then all would respond. The cooperation and sheer enormity of this as a statistical exercise would soon be put to the test.

1950S

TIT FOR TAT

Not long after the creation of NATO came the Korean War, and all the organisational skills and military resources of the United Nations Command, led by the USA, were needed to support the South Koreans, and was almost a dry run for NATO members to practice their collaboration. By 1952, Greece and Turkey had joined NATO, and in 1955, West Germany. This triggered a response from Moscow, creating the Warsaw Treaty Organisation amongst its satellite states. To all intents and purposes, it was a mirror image of NATO with Moscow pulling the strings. Amid rising tensions, the Eisenhower administration created 'massive retaliation' – the use of nuclear weapons against the Soviets or China for any conventional aggression anywhere in the world.

> "There would undoubtedly still have been significant cooperation with the US"

its allies. Berlin was indeed a battle, one which Stalin lost. He could not afford another such defeat, though NATO was not able to prevent Russia's savage ripostes against nations enmeshed within the Iron Curtain from breaking free, as Hungarians discovered in 1956, followed by Czechs in 1968.

With no United States on board, could another, different kind of European alliance have emerged, and what would it look like?

At that time, many of the now-member states were forcibly marooned behind the Iron Curtain and coerced into membership in the Warsaw Pact. This came into being in May 1955 as a military alliance between the USSR and seven vassal states – originally the Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance ('TFCMA'). The military aspect, Warsaw Treaty Organisation ('WTO'), balanced the purely economic facet – the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance ('COMECON'). This was a direct reaction to the formation of

ABOVE LEFT
Europe could not substitute the military might of the USA

ABOVE
Without the US, Europe would have to face Stalin alone

BOTTOM LEFT
The Berlin Wall may never have come down

NATO, perceived by the communists as primarily defensive.

Without the United States, it would be difficult to see how the Berlin Airlift confrontation could have been won, and it is hard to say what motivation the European states might have had to join together in a military alliance. The Common Market, now the European Union, was, in part, a reaction to the growing rift with the USSR after 1947, and Winston Churchill was an enthusiastic proponent. From 1948, we saw the beginnings of an institutionalised, modern European integration.

If the United States had preferred an isolationist stance, then it is unlikely NATO would have existed in its original or current form. What we would probably have seen would be a European Union army made up of detachments from the member states and the United Kingdom (not at that point a member). In some ways, it was almost a mirror of the Warsaw Pact but organised along democratic rather than totalitarian lines.

What would be the financial consequences for Europe with no US involvement in their defence?
European states, if they had been obliged to shoulder the full fiscal burden of an EU army, would have felt the impact on their respective economies and likely necessitated a much higher contribution from GDP in percentage terms. There would undoubtedly still have been significant cooperation with the US, whose massive resources were always a primary deterrent against Soviet aggression. It might have, indeed must have, led to a wholly different perspective from European states, each of whom, within NATO, felt dwarfed by the American juggernaut.

What would be the far-reaching consequences without NATO?
Without the United States, Europe would have been confronting the Warsaw Pact states without the shield of America as an inherent, indeed dominant element. What a military alliance between European states and the UK without direct US involvement might have looked like, we cannot say. Its nuclear arsenal would have been much reduced, and member states, as Britain did with the British Army of the Rhine ('BAOR'), would have needed to keep their own armed forces permanently up to wartime levels. Whether such an accord, post-fall of the Berlin Wall, would have continued is impossible to judge.

THE POSSIBILITY

1940S-50S

STANDING ALONE

With the Brussels Treaty of 1948, there was an indication amongst European nations that they had to do something to stick together and not blindly rely on the US to come to their aid. But putting that into practice was a different matter. The spoils of war for many Western allies were not sufficient to rebuild their nations from the ravages of WWII. Without the US, the cost of a standing army in constant readiness would be crippling. Facing a new 'enemy' in the Soviet Union, with its people driven by a single ideology and a regime determined to rebuild and even expand its nation, the threat of further conflict in Europe would have been very real.

1960S

EMPTY POCKETS

Wars are often fought to defend a way of life, a belief, or the rights of individuals. But the aftermath of war is almost always about money. In post-war Europe, money to rebuild nations and lives was thin on the ground. The huge US economy had more than played its part during and after the war. But without that, most European nations would struggle. Borrowing enough to make ends meet would have a colossal effect on both domestic and global markets. Hard decisions would need to be made, rationing food and other items may not have gone down well into the 1960s, raising the potential for domestic unrest an increasing threat.

1960-PRESENT

NO THAW IN THE COLD WAR

Even if the USA had not taken the step to be part of NATO, its relationship with the Soviet Union would probably have been just as competitive and just as frosty. Even with no official alliance with Europe, the US would still have needed the support of many Western countries to conduct its espionage and covert intelligence operations. In return, Europe may well have expected, or even demanded, 'unofficial' support in their own relationships with Moscow. Nevertheless, with the heat of the nuclear arms race, the chill of the Cold War, and no structure in place for the US to defend Europe, perestroika and the eventual collapse of the Berlin Wall may have been much longer in the coming, or not at all.

All images: © Alamy, Getty Images

What if…

NORTH KOREA HAD WON THE KOREAN WAR?

How a united, communist Korea would affect global politics in the 1950s and beyond

INTERVIEW WITH

© Andrew Salmon

Andrew Salmon

Andrew Salmon is a Seoul-based reporter and author. He has written four books on Korea, including *To The Last Round: The Epic British Stand on The Imjin River, Korea, 1951*, which was named Military Book of the Year in the UK in 2009 and won a Korean Wave award in South Korea's National Assembly for its contribution to the literature of the conflict. In 2014, he published *All That Matters: Modern Korea.*

FAR RIGHT
North Korea was very close to winning the Korean War, which could have changed the global political landscape as we know it

What would have happened if North Korea had won the Korean War?

It is impossible to answer this question; we can only speculate. But if – and it is a huge if – North Korea had won the war, then the massive devastation caused by the fighting, Chinese intervention, the 'scorched earth' retreat from North Korea and the US air campaign would have been largely obviated and this, in turn, might have led North Koreans not to harbour such bitter memories of the war. Moreover, the stability engendered by a unified country might have led to a less paranoid regime, and by defeating the US, the country would not have such a massive chip on its shoulder. Kim Il-sung's war aims were the unification of the peninsula and the end of the South Korean state. The best example of what might have been had North Korea won is probably Vietnam, which had a similar historical experience. It was a nation on the flank of China, was colonised and divided, and it fought the Americans. But Vietnam defeated its French colonial power in battle and drove off the Americans, reunifying the country. As such, Vietnam has decent international relations, a liberal economy and a relatively open society. Korea was unable to free itself from Japanese colonial rule, and North Korea was unable to defeat the US in war. North Korea has also shuttered itself off against the wider world, and there are few signs of a liberalising economy or society. Would a unified Korea look more like a unified Vietnam? Maybe.

How close was North Korea to winning the war?

At the beginning, North Korea was very close to winning the war. Republic of Korea (ROK) units were smashed in the initial blitzkrieg attack that took place in the early hours of Sunday 25 June 1950, and then pushed into a headlong retreat southward. US combat units rushing to the peninsula from Japan had no more luck in stemming the onrush of the North Korean People's Army (NKPA) in the early July battles.

It was only when the remaining ROK units and massive US (along with British) reinforcements arrived that a 130-mile (210-kilometre) defensive front was established in the southeast: the Pusan Perimeter. If you had looked at a map during the summer of 1950, this little corner of South Korea – along with a number of offshore islands – was the only part of the peninsula painted blue; the rest was the deepest red. However, by late summer, the NKPA had broken its teeth against the hardening ROK and UN defences. When General Douglas MacArthur, in a brilliant but risky gambit, pulled his best troops, the US Marines, out of the line, embarked them on landing craft, and landed them 200 miles (320 kilometres) in the enemy rear in his amphibious descent upon Inchon – the port serving Seoul – the NKPA's bolt was shot.

When did the United States choose to intervene?

The United States reacted very quickly and with a tremendous sense of urgency. The war broke out in the early hours of 25 June, and the US forces' air and naval units were committed on 27 June, soon followed by Australian and British units. In a model case of international consensus building, which would grant its intervention credibility, Washington went down the multilateral route and fought the war under the aegis of the United Nations. It is important to note that despite spirited and important roles of contingents from as far afield as Ethiopia and Columbia, the lion's share of the fighting was done by the ROK and US forces, with the UK, the UN's third-largest contingent, also playing a critical role. Arguably, the UN has not mounted such an effective military intervention since.

If North Korea had won the war, would the government and political elite of South Korea have escaped?

Perhaps, perhaps not. Syngman Rhee [the South Korean president] and Kim Il-sung [the leader of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea] never met, but they were to-the-death rivals: if Rhee and his key aides and allies had not escaped, it seems likely that they would have been at best imprisoned, at worst, liquidated. They could possibly have established a government-in-exile on an offshore Korean island or the United States. But whether he would have had the power or influence to convince the US to carry out a seaborne counterattack – probably from Japan – onto the Asian mainland is very questionable. First, the South Korean government of the 1950s was not the dynamic force it would become in the 1960s and 1970s when it engineered the 'economic miracle' and while MacArthur was close to Rhee, President Harry Truman was not, and the Bay of Pigs fiasco the US later engineered in Cuba would later show how dangerous such adventures could be.

RUSSIA
CHINA
NORTH KOREA
★ P'YONGYANG
Korea Bay
Demarcation Line
★ SEOUL
~~SOUTH~~
KOREA
Sea of Japan
Yellow Sea
Korea Strait

> "It would have been recognised internationally, in just the same way that Mao's Communist Party was eventually recognised as the government of mainland China"

> "Kim Il-sung's war aims were the unification of the peninsula and the end of the South Korean state"

RIGHT
American M-40 gun motor carriages provide heavy-artillery support to US Army's 25th Infantry Division in Korea, November 1951

If North Korea had won, would there have been purges?

North Korea has a poor history of human rights and a strong record of purging undesirables. During the war, both the South and North Koreans carried out numerous atrocities, including massacres of POWs, prisoners and regime opponents. If the North Koreans had won the war, they would have established Korea as a unified country: this was why Kim Il-sung, who was a nationalist as well as a communist, launched the war in the first place.

If it had been established as one unified country, would it have been recognised internationally?

I suspect it would have been recognised internationally, in just the same way that Mao's Communist Party was eventually recognised as the government of mainland China. It would certainly have been welcomed by its communist allies with whom it shared (and still shares) borders - China and the Soviet Union/Russia - and with the wider communist bloc. And with South Korea eliminated as a free-world nation, then the 'east' truly would have been 'red': The northeast Asian mainland would have been communist, with just Japan and Taiwan, on their island fastnesses, holding out.

Would Kim Il-sung have been the leader?

Yes, there is no doubt that Kim Il-sung was the man in charge. Indeed, several of his generals and other factions were purged after the war. As it is, North Korea's personality cult paints Kim as the greatest Korean and one of the greatest human beings who ever lived - even though his biggest gambit, the war to reunify Korea, failed. If he had succeeded, his standing would have been magnified, though it is difficult to imagine a personality cult stronger than the one in place today.

How would the worldwide balance of power have changed?

Korea has historically seen itself as a 'shrimp' between the 'whales' of China, Russia and Japan. In the modern era - ie the late-19th century onward - it has tried to pit one power against another, though this has not always worked. To a large extent, the first Sino-Japanese War and the Russo-Japanese War were both fought over which of these powers would control Korea. What is often overlooked in 21st-century South Korea is that there were strong Korean factions at that time who favoured Japan, just as there were other factions that favoured China and Russia. As for the effect of a communist victory in Korea in 1950, arguably, the United States would have become more defensive and more hard-line in defending free-world interests. Compared to China and the USSR, Korea is not that significant in terms of the communist bloc's economic, political or military arms. North Korea has a formidable army for fighting on its home turf, but beyond its special forces, it has no real expeditionary forces, so it doesn't affect the global balance of power. Currently, an isolated North Korea is creating nuclear weapons and strategic missiles. If it had won the war, it might not have felt the need for these programmes.

HOW WOULD IT BE DIFFERENT?

REAL TIMELINE

1910

Japanese Empire
After the Russo-Japanese War (1904-1905), Korea became a protectorate of Japan. The Empire of Japan annexed Korea in 1910, leading to 35 years of colonial rule.
1910

WWII ends
After World War II, Japanese occupation of Korea ends with Soviet troops occupying the north, and US troops the south part of the country.
1945

KWP formed
North Korea's Communist Party Korean Workers' Party (KWP) is established. Soviet-backed leadership is installed, including Red Army-trained Kim Il-sung.
1946

Russia withdraws
Russian troops begin leaving North Korea, leaving Kim Il-sung in charge. In the south, the Republic of Korea is formed with Syngman Rhee as the country's first president.
1948

American withdrawal
US troops begin leaving the south of the country, giving the north encouragement that they could unify the country.
1949

Invasion
North Korea invades the south, crossing the 38th Parallel, leading to a full-scale war. Two days later, their tanks reach the outskirts of Seoul.
25 June 1950

ALTERNATE TIMELINE

No assistance
The Americans decide that Korea falls outside their strategic sphere of influence, and the South Koreans, with their poorly armed troops, are overwhelmed in battle.
26 June 1950

How might Seoul have developed?

Well, the 'economic miracle' of the 1970s – the extraordinary process of a backward, agrarian country transforming itself into an export powerhouse and heavy industrial player – would not have happened. In turn, the political miracle of the 1980s – when the country, through people-power protests, forced the military junta to accept democratic elections – would not have transpired either. With the above developments absent, the ongoing social and cultural changes under which Koreans have become high-tech, global citizens, overturning many of the autocratic, old-fashioned aspects of their society and developing internationally admired entertainment products, would not have taken place. That having been said, Seoul, as the capital or sub-capital of a Korea unified by Kim Il-sung, would probably not be as insular, isolated and paranoid as Pyongyang is today. Again, we can look at the example of Hanoi's status as the capital of a unified Vietnam. Both Hanoi and Saigon today are far more open than Pyongyang in political, economic and social terms. Perhaps a Kim-ruled Seoul would look like a cross between today's Pyongyang and today's Saigon.

How long would the new regime have lasted?

As it is, the Kim regime has survived a devastating war, the collapse of European communism, famine, poverty, and the death of both its founding father and his son, yet has still managed to pass power on to the third generation. In gentler and kinder circumstances, it seems unlikely that the regime would have given up its grip on power. Then again, perhaps a more open, less isolated and less totalitarian communist Korea would have been more vulnerable to (or open to) change and so would have collapsed. We saw this with the regimes in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. Militating against that speculation is the fact that in Asia – in Beijing and Hanoi – communist parties have actually survived in political power even while they have opened their economies and societies. So my guess is that the Kims would have survived as leaders of a unified Korea. I also suspect that the government of a Kim-unified Korea would have been harder-line than the current governments in power in Hanoi and Beijing but not as hard-line as the current regime reigning in Pyongyang today.

How might the world have differed?

Not radically. Sure, there would be no Samsung smartphones or PSY but none of these things can be said to have made a significant difference to humanity. However, the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. If South Korea had ceased to exist in 1950, we would not have witnessed the greatest national success story of the 20th century; the rise of South Korea from the ashes of war to become one of the most admired national benchmarks on Earth – an economic force, democratic polity and an increasingly liberal society. More broadly, if there were not two opposed Koreas, a major casus belli would not exist in northeast Asia. Absent this, perhaps the region – China, Korea, Japan and the Russian Far East – would have achieved economic unity, like the European Union and the North American Free Trade Area.

ABOVE
US Marines taking North Korean soldiers prisoner, Korea, 1951

- **American assistance**
  After the invasion of the south and full-scale war, the US military intervenes extremely quickly with air and naval units engaged only a few days after the conflict breaks out.
  27 June 1950
- **Engage the enemy**
  US ground units meet the enemy in battle. Although they are unsuccessful, it highlights how quickly American troops engage North Korea. USA gets international cooperation and legitimacy for the conflict through the UN.
  5 July 1950
- **Stalemate**
  An armistice is called. The war has cost over 2 million lives and the country is split into two. The Demilitarized Zone is reset as boundary between communist North and anti-communist South.
  July 27 1953
- **North Korean purge**
  Relations with Russia and China and North Korea deteriorate but Kim remains in power and strengthens his grip by purging his enemies.
  1958
- **Economic miracle**
  The country continues to experience economic and industrial growth but its government is still a long way removed from democracy and would be until the sixth republic.
  1979
- **North Korea nosedives**
  North Korea's economy begins to deteriorate rapidly, propelled by the fall of the Soviet Union and the end of their favoured trade and aid. In the mid-1990s famine ravages the country and possibly a million people die.
  1990s
- **Two very different countries**
  Relations between the two countries are still strained and the demilitarised zone that separates the two countries stretches the width of the peninsula and into the Yellow Sea.
  Present day

- **Marching on Seoul**
  North Korean troops enter Seoul just a few days after the conflict has begun. Members of the South Korean government flee the country for the United States.
  29 June 1950
- **Purges**
  The North Korean leader Kim Il-sung orders a purge of those he sees a threat to his government. Tens of thousands of people are killed. **1951**
- **Communist borders**
  China and the Soviet Union welcome the new united country. Northeast Asia is now 'red' with just Japan and Taiwan not communist.
  1952
- **Bay of Pigs**
  After the Bay of Pigs invasion in Cuba ends in fiasco, the South Korean exiled government's hopes for a US-backed counter invasion of Korea are dashed. **1961**
- **Cult of the leader**
  The country is united under Kim Il-Sung with his face appearing all over the united country. Korea is recognized as one country with Kim as its leader.
  1974

- **Open economy**
  Korea is still ruled by Kim's grandson in an authoritarian manner but China-style economic reforms are implemented. As market capitalism takes effect, hopes arise for a more democratic polity.
  Present day

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What if...

THE USA HAD WON THE VIETNAM WAR?

With the US successful in Vietnam, it could have adopted a more aggressive, less gun-shy foreign policy...

INTERVIEW WITH

© Andrew Wiest

Dr Andrew Wiest

Dr Andrew Wiest lectures at the University of Southern Mississippi. His books include *The Boys Of '67: Charlie Company's War In Vietnam*, *Vietnam's Forgotten Army: Heroism And Betrayal In The ARVN* and *Vietnam: A View From The Front Lines*. He has also organised trips for Vietnam veterans suffering from PTSD to visit the country they once fought in.

What would have happened if the United States had won the Vietnam War?

There are a lot of academics and historians who look at Vietnam as a part of something much bigger – namely, the Cold War. So if the United States had won, the Cold War would probably have ended a little sooner, and the dawn of that unilateral superpower controlling things would have come quicker. In Southeast Asia, everything would be radically different – including a faster and more thorough confrontation between the US and China. I doubt China would have sat by and let an American victory happen without repercussion – even though they were not exactly fans of the Vietnamese either. I don't think Beijing would have invaded Vietnam to repel the Americans, as they did in Korea, but it certainly would have been the US against China and Russia. And it would have been a war that was not just cold but glacial. American politics would certainly have been more tumultuous as well.

If you look at the US presidential elections since the 1960s, every one of them has been fought over Vietnam to one extent or another. It is still the most controversial aspect of a controversial time period. Had they come out of that smiling, with another greatest generation on their hands, politics in the US would have looked quite different. For instance, it is hard to see the Republican revolution taking place. Republicans typically have an aggressive foreign policy – it is one of their tropes – but if Democratic policy had won in Vietnam – because it was the Democrats who started the war in Southeast Asia – that would have taken a lot of heat away from their rivals.

Would the US have become involved in more conflicts?

Yes, I think the US would have been much less gun-shy during the 1970s and 1980s. Reagan tinkered with it, but that use of force to solve conflicts didn't really come back until the first Bush and then with Bill Clinton. The reason the US did not rely on its military, on any great scale at least, to solve problems during the 1970s and the 1980s was all down to the country's failure in Vietnam.

When the Vietnam War began to cross into Cambodia, it created the environment in which Pol Pot and the Khmer Rouge came to power. What resulted was a four-year holocaust. Could this have been avoided?

If the US was ever going to win the Vietnam War, it would have been during the Tet Offensive of 1968. That was the turning point, and that was when the public, back in the United States, saw the North Vietnamese were not just going to retreat and surrender – it was literally a fight to the death.

Of course, there was no big, magical American victory during Tet, but let's imagine there was. Let's imagine the US had repelled that attack quickly and conclusively, and the war was essentially over as a result. At that point in time, the Khmer Rouge was not a big player in the conflict. It is only after the US began its military incursions into Cambodia, and the government in that country began to fall, that everything became out of hand. A victorious US in Vietnam would not have required any entrance into Cambodia, and as a result, you almost certainly would not have seen the rise of the Khmer Rouge. They are intrinsically tied to how the Vietnam War progressed, no doubt about that.

Would we ever have seen a situation like in Korea where the communist North and the democratic South are split down the middle, even to this day?

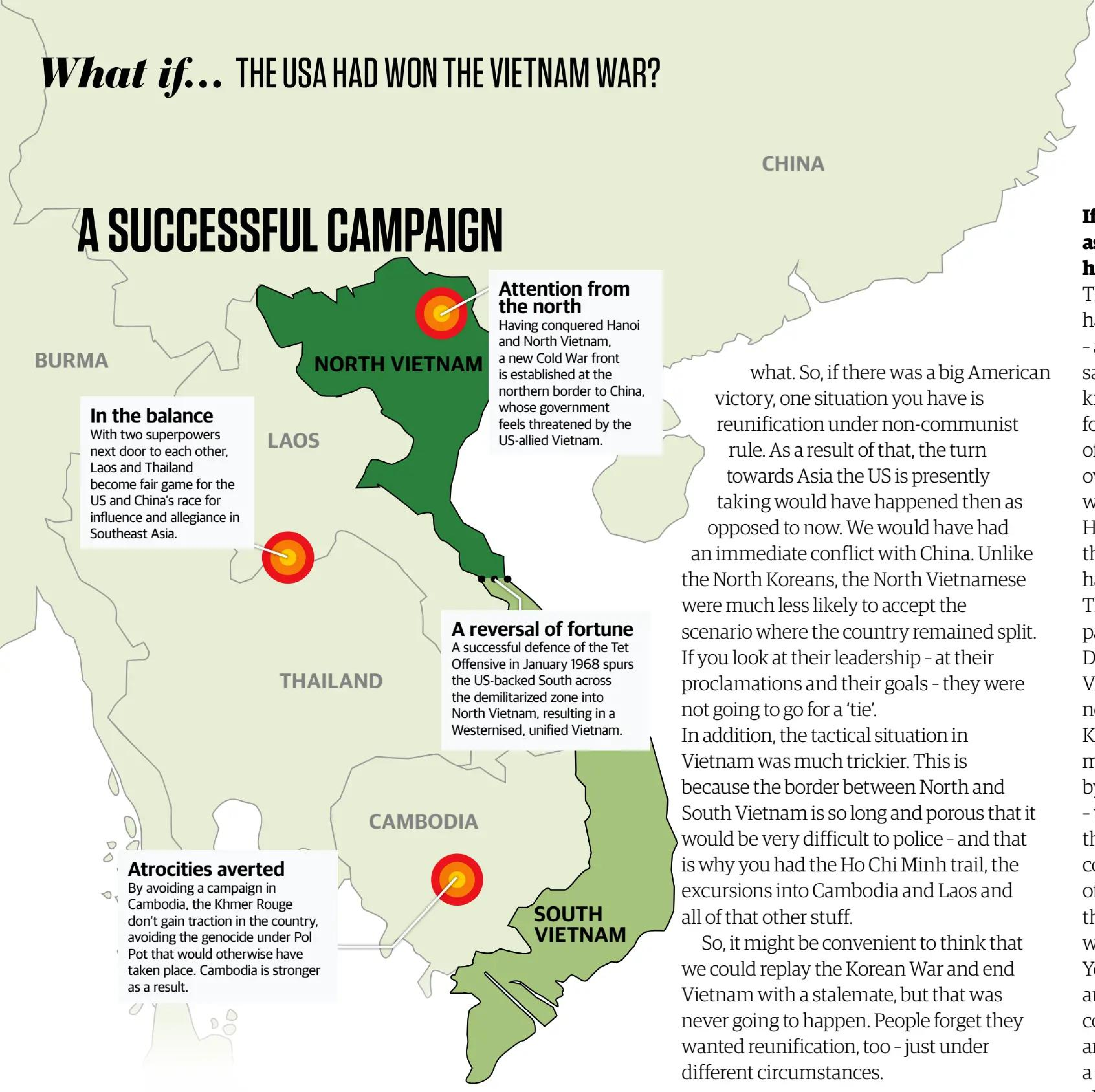
No, that was never going to happen. One side was going to reunify the country, no matter

RIGHT
A man suspected of supporting the Viet Cong forces being arrested and detained by US forces

FAR RIGHT
If the US campaign in Vietnam had proven successful, we might have seen an even greater influx of American influence than has already happened

HA LONG BAY
McDonald's
BOOSTER
LIGHTNING

A SUCCESSFUL CAMPAIGN



Attention from the north
Having conquered Hanoi and North Vietnam, a new Cold War front is established at the northern border to China, whose government feels threatened by the US-allied Vietnam.

In the balance
With two superpowers next door to each other, Laos and Thailand become fair game for the US and China's race for influence and allegiance in Southeast Asia.

A reversal of fortune
A successful defence of the Tet Offensive in January 1968 spurs the US-backed South across the demilitarized zone into North Vietnam, resulting in a Westernised, unified Vietnam.

Atrocities averted
By avoiding a campaign in Cambodia, the Khmer Rouge don't gain traction in the country, avoiding the genocide under Pol Pot that would otherwise have taken place. Cambodia is stronger as a result.

what. So, if there was a big American victory, one situation you have is reunification under non-communist rule. As a result of that, the turn towards Asia the US is presently taking would have happened then as opposed to now. We would have had an immediate conflict with China. Unlike the North Koreans, the North Vietnamese were much less likely to accept the scenario where the country remained split. If you look at their leadership – at their proclamations and their goals – they were not going to go for a 'tie'.

In addition, the tactical situation in Vietnam was much trickier. This is because the border between North and South Vietnam is so long and porous that it would be very difficult to police – and that is why you had the Ho Chi Minh trail, the excursions into Cambodia and Laos and all of that other stuff.

So, it might be convenient to think that we could replay the Korean War and end Vietnam with a stalemate, but that was never going to happen. People forget they wanted reunification, too – just under different circumstances.

If John F. Kennedy had not been assassinated, would the Vietnam War have been avoided?

That is a controversial question. There have been so many arguments about this – and, of course, Kennedy's legacy is such a sacred thing in the States that it is political kryptonite to touch it. The pro-Kennedy forces argue he wanted to withdraw most of the 16,000 military advisors that were over there. However, before Kennedy, there were only 600 military advisors over there. He had begun a war over there, and I think there are two things that still would have hamstrung him even if he had wanted out. The first is that he still wanted his political party to win another term, and if the Democrats had wiped their hands of Vietnam, there is a good chance they would not have achieved that. The second is that Kennedy wanted his brother to be the next man in the White House. To mess that up – by handing Vietnam to the communists – would have sunk this. I would also argue that Robert McNamara, who was Kennedy's confidant in the first place and the architect of the Vietnam War, was going to give him the same advice he gave Lyndon B Johnson – which was to go in with all guns blazing. You have to remember that both Kennedy and Johnson faced the post-World War II consensus: to fight a difficult, problematic and long war against what they perceived as a communist threat or to embark on social changes back home – in particular, the civil rights movement. I think Kennedy was going to veer toward the civil rights movement – just as Johnson did. But I don't think you get both – civil rights and the end of Vietnam.

> "If the US was ever going to win the Vietnam War it would have been during the Tet Offensive of 1968"

HOW WOULD IT BE DIFFERENT?

REAL TIMELINE

1945

Vietnamese Declaration of Independence
Based on the American Declaration of Independence, Ho Chi Minh asks the US and the West to oppose French colonial rule in Vietnam and support what will be "a free and independent country".
2 September 1945

Ho Chi Minh contacts President Truman
The Vietnamese revolutionary writes to Truman asking him to "urgently interfere" in the foreign rule of his country. Truman fears Vietnam becoming communist and instead backs the French.
28 February 1946

The Geneva Conference
France agrees to the decolonisation of Vietnam. Free elections are promised, but the US suspects the communist Ho Chi Minh may win. It installs a brutal dictator, Ngo Dinh Diem, in South Vietnam. He is viewed by Ho Chi Minh and the North as a puppet ruler.
21 July 1954

Assassination of Đình Diêm
Diem – whose anti-Buddhist policies famously caused the monk Thich Quang Duc to immolate himself – is murdered in a brutal but mysterious coup d'état.
2 November 1963

ALTERNATE TIMELINE

US reunites Korea
Fears that China would support the North prove unfounded. The US manages to push back the comparatively minimal army of Kim Il-sung and successfully reunites the two Koreas. Seoul aligns itself as a Western-friendly government.
27 July 1953

ABOVE
A convoy of US tanks in Vietnam

That mixture would have brought the Democrats down at the voting booth.

Is there any way the Vietnam War may have been avoided?

Asking anyone to do the right thing back then was difficult. Had Franklin Roosevelt lived, maybe things could have been avoided. He had a guy on his team who was a communist, namely Stalin, and Roosevelt was not a fan of European colonialism. So he may have sided with Ho Chi Minh's desire to have an independent Vietnam, free from French rule. Had he lived longer, with all of his clout, I think that is the best chance we would have had to avoid starting a war.

Vietnam is now engulfed with examples of American culture. So who really won the war?

WeWell, that is the thing – they are now US allies. It shows, as Sun Tzu said, the best tool to win a war is not always the military. It was American culture that eventually prevailed.

If you look at things like Rambo and all these other Hollywood movies that attempted to justify the conflict, it is obvious how much impact it had on the United States. But it was just a blip on the radar to the Vietnamese. It cost them many more lives, but it was all part of a bigger struggle for independence.

Today, Vietnam has a huge young generation, and this is all ancient history to them. They have moved on, but ironically, it is the face of the US they now buy into.

Gulf of Tomkin fabrication
North Vietnamese ships are reported to have fired on a US patroller, the Maddox, in the South China Sea. President Johnson uses the event to justify going to war. Declassified documents later confirmed that no attack happened. **2 August 1964**

The My Lai Massacre
At My Lai, families are raped, tortured and killed by US soldiers. Lieutenant William Calley, who instigated the horror, walks free, but world opinion becomes opposed to 'America's war'. **16 March 1968**

Paris Peace Accords
Nixon's government agrees to a ceasefire, with US ground troops and POWs returning home. The reunification of Vietnam is now a matter between the respective Saigon and Hanoi governments. **27 January 1973**

Fall of Saigon
The war ends with the North Vietnamese taking Saigon by force and celebrating a reunified country. Ho Chi Minh, who died in 1969, remains a national icon. Saigon is now known as Ho Chi Minh City. **30 April 1975**

Tet Offensive
On Vietnamese New Year, the North surprises the South with a sudden offensive. The city of Hue witnesses extensive fighting. South Vietnam and its allies suffer drastic losses. **30 January - 3 March 1968**

Ho Chi Minh at the UN
Ho Chi Minh gives a rousing speech at the UN, but with the new Korea becoming an international trading partner, western nations side with the US on Vietnamese reunification. **December 1956**

Gulf of Tomkin fabrication
Johnson, respecting Kennedy's opposition to communism in Asia and Latin America, fabricates the Gulf of Tonkin incident to justify entering the war in Vietnam. **2 August 1964**

Failed Tet Offensive
The North Vietnamese conduct a failed attempt to take Saigon, Hue and other cities in South Vietnam. Forewarned about the attack, the US Army repels their enemies. **30 January - 14 February 1968**

Free elections
Pressured into elections, US fears come true and Ho Chi Minh becomes president of Vietnam. However, believing this would expose the South Vietnamese to communist rule, the Eisenhower government argues the elections were fixed. **January 1956**

Fixed elections?
Eisenhower releases a statement claiming that, "After an extensive CIA investigation we can reveal the elections in Vietnam were rigged." South Vietnam is to continue with a 'democratic' regime headed by an interim coalition of allied countries. **March 1956**

Kennedy's speech
Concluding with how close the world came to nuclear war during the Cuban Missile Crisis, President Kennedy affirms that all communist countries must be treated as rogue states. Military involvement is increased heavily in Vietnam. **October 1962**

Cambodia's involvement
The White House offers to supply Cambodia's Communist Party of Kampuchea guerrilla fighters in aid and arms if they can offer the US details of the Ho Chi Minh trail supply route. The deal is only revealed decades later. **August 1967**

Fall of Hanoi
On Ho Chi Minh's birthday, the North Vietnam capital collapses under the military might of the US army. The war is over. China becomes so concerned that Mao immediately agrees to a trade pact with Coca-Cola. **19 May 1968**

© Daniel Sinoca, Dreamstime

What if...

THE BEATLES NEVER FORMED?

With no John, Paul, George and Ringo making music together, which musicians would be the ones to fill the void?

EXPERT INSIGHT
Nick Churchill

Nick Churchill is a writer, journalist and critic who has been immersed in pop music ever since he taped a hairbrush to the Eubank and sang along to 'I Feel Fine'. His book *Yeah Yeah Yeah: The Beatles & Bournemouth* did more for one than the other.

The runaway success of American stars like Frank Sinatra, Johnny Ray and Elvis Presley ensured that by 1957, Britain's teenage market for short, catchy songs delivered by handsome men was firmly established and clamouring for home-grown talent.

But if a 16-year-old tearaway called John Lennon had decided not to enlist the services of James Paul McCartney into his skiffle group, The Quarrymen, that autumn, they might never have become The Beatles. A self-confessed know-all, Lennon could easily have dismissed the younger McCartney out of hand. But early the following year, George Harrison joined at McCartney's suggestion, and the die was cast. Fame and fortune would soon follow.

Had Lennon ploughed on without them, it's likely The Quarrymen would have remained an obscurity. However, he could well have pursued a solitary creative path. McCartney had the chops to follow his own star and may have done well in showbiz. Harrison, too, had the talent, looks and ambition to make it - maybe as a guitar prodigy. At that time, Ringo Starr was making his name as a drummer for hire and would certainly have done very nicely.

By 1962, as The Beatles scored their first hit, 'Love Me Do', Britain's nascent pop industry was hitting its stride. Tommy Steele, Adam Faith, Helen Shapiro and Cliff Richard were big stars. Still, they were safe, sanitised and likely to be as popular with parents as they were with the kids.

That was never enough for The Beatles, who challenged the status quo by writing their own material; who turned their backs on touring and demanded unlimited studio time with creative freedom. But without them to lead the charge, what would have become of their musical contemporaries?

The Rolling Stones would have formed, but without Lennon and McCartney to gift them their first top 20 hit - 'I Wanna Be Your Man' - they would have continued to ape American rhythm & blues or given in to Mick Jagger's attraction to fame and churned out a series of Tin Pan Alley hits.

Similarly, The Kinks and The Who would have formed through London's music scenes, but if they'd never heard The Beatles' early work, would Ray Davies have co-opted music hall to create a new musical vernacular, or Pete Townshend have found the courage to cook up a rock opera?

In the US, Brian Wilson herded The Beach Boys into a maelstrom of creativity because of The Beatles' *Rubber Soul* album, but without that catalyst, perhaps his demons would have consumed his talent even more completely, making it easier for the group to follow the money.

Dylan would still have happened, but The Byrds would never have married his vision of folk music to a Beatle beat and sounded the West Coast psychedelic sirens, leaving only the dystopian distortions of New Yorkers like The Velvet Underground or Mid-Western agitproppers the MC5 to drive the creative imperative.

In a world without The Beatles, something else would have filled the vacuum as technology drove a new teen audience through transistor radios, portable record players and TV, but it would have looked and sounded very different.

HOW WOULD IT BE DIFFERENT?

REAL TIMELINE

1957

Paul meets John
John Lennon's skiffle group, The Quarrymen, play a church garden fete witnessed by Paul McCartney, who is subsequently introduced to Lennon.
6 July 1957

George meets John
Haunted by his dismissal of 'that chubby kid McCartney' Lennon invites 14-year-old guitarist George Harrison to join The Quarrymen.
6 February 1958

Stones begin to roll
Mick Jagger, Brian Jones and Keith Richards play their first gig as The Rollin' Stones at the Marquee Club in London.
12 July 1962

Lineup confirmed
Now performing as The Beatles, the group – buoyed by the recruitment of Ringo Starr – release their first album, *Please Please Me.*
22 March 1963

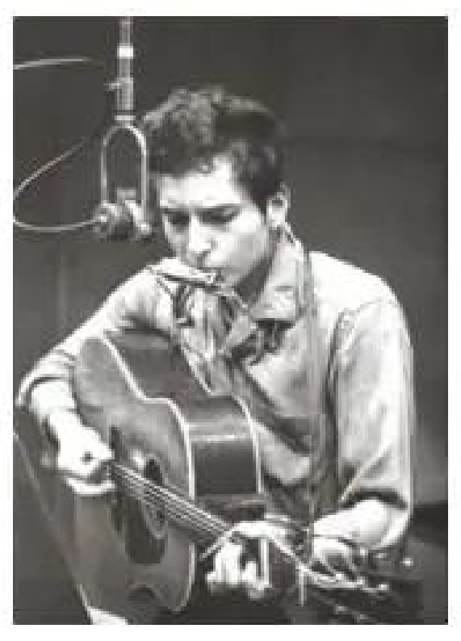
Beatlemania begins
'I Wanna Hold Your Hand' reaches the number-one spot on the *Billboard* charts, heralding that the Fab Four have broken into the US.
1 February 1964

Bigger than Jesus
John Lennon remarks to the *Evening Standard* that The Beatles are "bigger than Jesus". Christian communities in the US react negatively.
15 July 1966

ALTERNATE TIMELINE

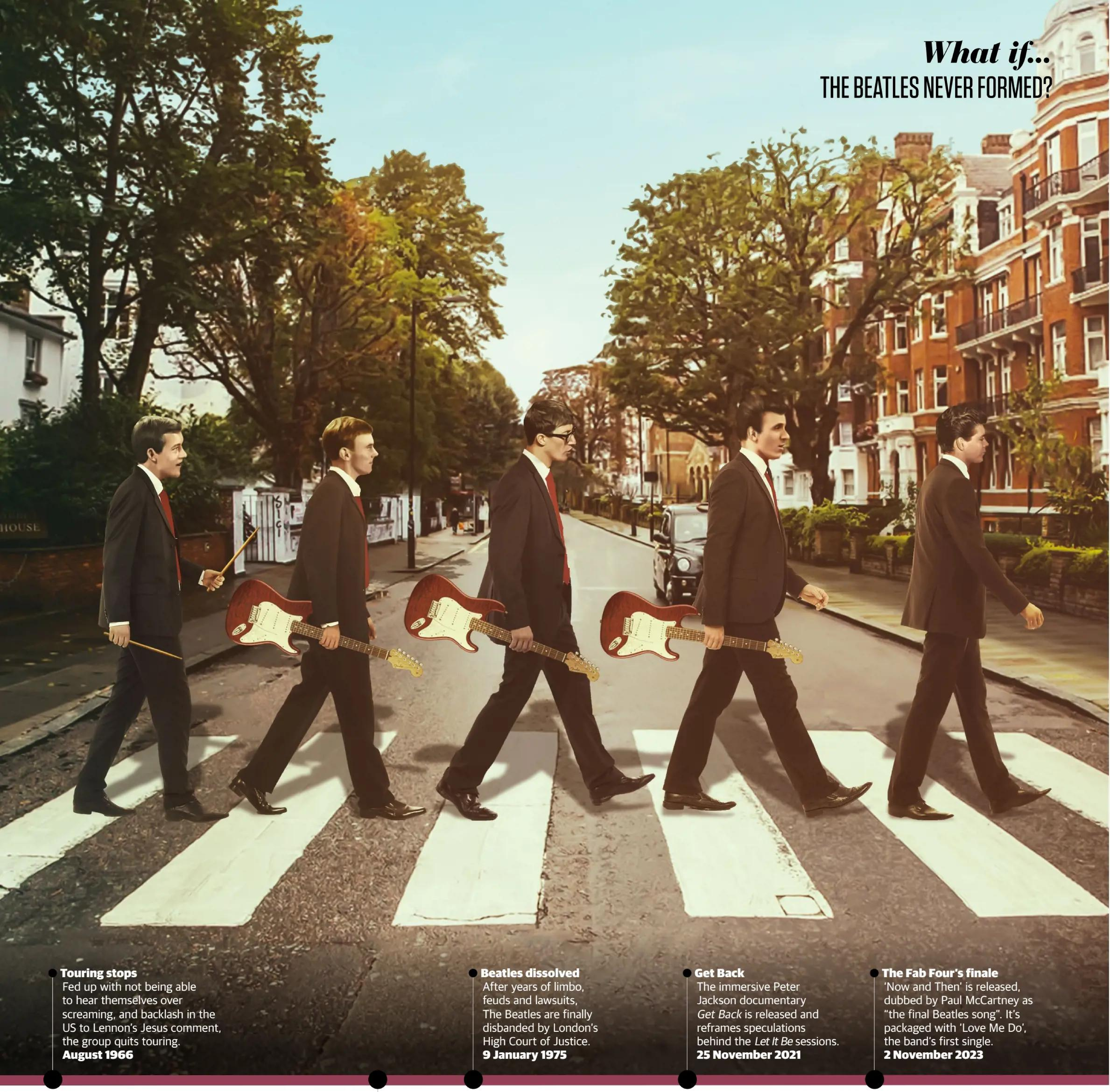
Ringo approached
The Quarrymen invite drummer Ringo Starr to leave his safe gig in Rory Storm and the Hurricanes and join them. He declines.
18 August 1962

Stones on their way
Having produced hits for the likes of Jimmy Young and Dickie Valentine, Dick Rowe signs The Rollin' Stones to Decca.
May 1963



Dylan stays true
The album *Another Side of Bob Dylan* is released and its creator is lauded for resisting the urge to go electric and copy the Stones.
8 August 1964

What if...
THE BEATLES NEVER FORMED?



Touring stops
Fed up with not being able to hear themselves over screaming, and backlash in the US to Lennon's Jesus comment, the group quits touring.
August 1966

Beatles dissolved
After years of limbo, feuds and lawsuits, The Beatles are finally disbanded by London's High Court of Justice.
9 January 1975

Get Back
The immersive Peter Jackson documentary *Get Back* is released and reframes speculations behind the *Let It Be* sessions.
25 November 2021

The Fab Four's finale
'Now and Then' is released, dubbed by Paul McCartney as "the final Beatles song". It's packaged with 'Love Me Do', the band's first single.
2 November 2023

Stones ground down
The Rollin' Stones career is effectively ended when Jagger and Richards are arrested at the latter's mansion on drugs charges.
12 February 1967

The beginning of the end
Sessions for *Let It Be* begin. George Harrison quits the band, only to rejoin soon after. The group perform publicly for the last time.
January 1969

Reagan assassinated
Pop music fan Mark David Chapman, 25, shoots US President-elect Ronald Reagan in Washington in a seemingly motiveless attack.
8 December 1980

Jesus stalls Stones
Reacting to their stranglehold on the pop charts, Cliff Richard reminds fans that Jesus is bigger than The Rollin' Stones.
5 August 1966

The Devil in Iggy
As The Stooges release their debut album, Iggy Pop says the Devil has all the best tunes because he gave them to him.
5 August 1969

Lennon-McCartney, finally
Local artist John Lennon and vicar George Harrison reform The Quarrymen in Liverpool for their 60th anniversary and invite TV show host Paul McCartney to join them.
8 July 2017

© Getty Images, Daniel Sinoca

What if…

JFK HADN'T BEEN ASSASSINATED?

How scandal and ill health would have plagued the late John F Kennedy if he were able to continue his presidency

INTERVIEW WITH

© Jeff Greenfield

Jeff Greenfield

Award-winning US television journalist Jeff Greenfield has worked for CNN, ABC News and CBS as well as writing for *Time Magazine, The New York Times* and *The Los Angeles Times* in a career spanning more than 30 years. He has also written or co-authored 13 books, including the best-seller *If Kennedy Lived: The First and Second Terms Of President John F Kennedy.*

What would have happened if JFK hadn't been killed in Dallas in 1963?

It's entirely possible that if Kennedy had survived, his vice president, Lyndon Johnson, would have been forced out of public life. The day Kennedy was shot in Dallas, there were two different investigations into Lyndon Johnson's finances. One on Capitol Hill by a Senate committee that had alleged he had taken kickbacks and the other by *Life* magazine, which at the time was one of the most important publications in America. It asked how a man who had been on the public payroll all his life could accumulate so much money. Now, when Kennedy was killed, these came to an instant end because nobody was interested in further shocking an already traumatised nation.

Had Kennedy survived, the impulse would have been accelerated to figure out what was up with this guy who, after all, would have remained a heartbeat, as they say, away from the White House. So I think the first consequence was that Lyndon Johnson would have been forced out of public life by a scandal, and there's a very good chance of that.

Would the Cold War and tensions with the Soviet Union have escalated in the same way if Kennedy had survived two terms?

The thing I would stress is that a lot of people look at the way Kennedy ran for president, very hawkish, very militant and in his inaugural speech, he said he would pay any price and bear any burden. But they failed to recognise how much the Cuban missile crisis had affected him. It's pretty clear that he and Khrushchev [Former General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union] had come close to presiding over a nuclear holocaust; it dramatically changed the way he looked at the world. That's when he began looking for common ground with the Soviet Union: a test-ban treaty, possibly other steps to turn down the temperature of the Cold War.

How would the Vietnam War been affected?

In terms of an international scandal, the big debate was, of course, the war in Vietnam. Here, you're dealing with probabilities: when you do alternate history - at least when I do it - you get as close as possible to what the players said and thought at the time when you take history down a different path. The evidence is that during the fall of 1963, Kennedy had realised that Vietnam was a losing proposition. He had carelessly authorised - or didn't stop - a coup that had put new people in charge of South Vietnam. He saw this as a situation that violated a fundamental belief of his about committing large numbers of Americans to a land war in Asia. He had always said to people that he wanted to disengage but he couldn't do it until he was re-elected in 1964 - the politics wouldn't let him. He would have been accused of being soft on communism. My best guess is that he would have played for time in 1964, tried to keep the status quo, and tried to keep any incidents from arising. I think that the Gulf of Tonkin incident [two separate confrontations involving North Vietnam and the United States around the Gulf of Tonkin] would never have happened. He would have been confronted in 1964 with a possible incident in the Gulf

Images: Getty Images

RIGHT
The president was shot twice while in a motorcade in Dallas, Texas on 22 November 1963

FAR RIGHT
If John F Kennedy hadn't been assassinated, his legacy might not be as positive as it is today

> "By the time he would have served a second term no one knows how his health would have been"

of Tonkin, but he certainly never would have asked Congress for the blank cheque that Johnson sought.

My best guess is that he would not have moved the way Johnson did, very quickly and secretly, to increase the American commitment. I think we would have been spared a war in Vietnam. And if we had been, the cultural clash in the US would have been very different in the late 1960s. We would have drugs, we would have had sex, we would have had long hair… we wouldn't have had a group of protestors who saw in Vietnam proof that the country was not thrown on the wrong course, but it was somehow malicious… to use George Bush's term 'a kind of general protest movement'.

Do you think that Kennedy would have become more of an icon for that generation?

Interestingly enough, I think not - or less so. Because it was his death, his martyrdom, that made him such an icon. I think that wouldn't have been the case because when you take someone violently off the scene at his peak, he becomes idolised. I think he would have [become more involved in] public service, domestic Peace Corps, stuff like that: I think that would have been accelerated because that was something he was very passionate about. On the other hand, the other thing that was a danger when he went to Dallas was that his private life was being looked at very carefully by some members of the press. The idea that nobody knew, that it was a different era, was true, but you had some very significant investigative reporters who were sniffing around Kennedy's private life. I think he and his brother Robert would have worked very hard to keep that secret. Maybe they would have succeeded - we forget how tough-minded he could be back then in terms of intimidating the press with threats of hack investigations and anti-trust. But I think enough would have leaked out to have an impact on his reputation. Not dying at 46 [years old] means the martyrdom and idolisation wouldn't have happened.

JFK's relationship with Marilyn Monroe is legendary today. Do you think the US would have experienced something akin to the Clinton scandal?

I tell you what would have been different: I asked some people whether Kennedy could have survived this scandal - they said, 'Of course not.' The cultural climate of the US in [the early 1960s] compared to the 1990s was just radically different. In 1964, we had a presidential candidate - Nelson Rockefeller - who lost a key presidential primary just as his wife gave birth to a baby, and it reminded people that he had left his older wife for a younger woman. We had never had a divorced president in 1964, and there was no idea of, 'Oh well, it's private. Everybody plays around a bit.' I think it would have been far more shocking. The culture was only beginning to change by the mid-1960s. So that's why I think they would have had to work so hard to prevent the story from becoming public. It was just a different time completely.

How long do you think his wife Jackie would have endured it?

What Jackie might do is create a kind of informal separation, 'I'm going to New York.

HOW WOULD IT BE DIFFERENT?

REAL TIMELINE

1952

JFK is elected to the Senate
After eight years in the House of Representatives, Kennedy wins the 1952 election for a seat in the Senate. He marries Jacqueline Lee Bouvier the following year.
4 November 1952

Kennedy becomes president
A well-organised campaign and support from Lyndon B Johnson sees Kennedy defeat Republican candidate Richard Nixon in the presidential election, to become the 35th president of the United States of America.
8 November 1960

Peace Corps created
Executive Order 10924 establishes this volunteer US programme to promote relations between America and the rest of the world.
1 March 1961

Start of the Cuban missile crisis
A CIA spy plane takes photographs of ballistic missile sites being built in Cuba by the Soviets. Kennedy reacts by creating a naval quarantine that inspects all Soviet ships arriving at Cuba.
14 October 1962

Concerns about Vietnam
In his assessment of the Vietnam situation, Kennedy says: "We don't have a prayer of staying in Vietnam […] They are going to throw our asses out […] but I can't give up that territory to the communists and get the American people to re-elect me."
April 1963

JFK assassinated
While visiting Dallas, Texas, riding in an open-top car, Kennedy is shot three times: once in the head, once in the back and once in the neck, and dies from his wounds.
22 November 1963

ALTERNATE TIMELINE

LEFT
If JFK had served a second term, the US might have become less involved in the Vietnam War

RIGHT
The March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom in 1962 was an important moment for civil rights, but JFK's record on this issue wasn't as strong as his successor's would be

I'm setting up my own life. We're not going to divorce or anything, but I'm finding my own way.' I have no way of knowing, but I do think she would have tried to make a life for herself. You forget that when Jackie was first lady, she was 31 years old - breathtakingly young. So you're talking about a woman now, not quite reaching her 40th year, and she's stood by her husband. But she doesn't have to do that anymore because he's not running for anything, so I do think she would have tried to find a life for herself, with or without Kennedy.

We also don't know what his health was like. Someone asked him, "Why are you running for president?" in 1960. "You're so young." He said, "I don't know what my health is going to be like in eight years." He suffered from all kinds of ailments: he had Addison's disease, he had horrible intestinal problems, he apparently had an untreated venereal disease, the combination of drugs he was taking for Addison's and his injury from the war made his back [ache] - just agony. One historian praises him for his sheer raw courage going through a day, given what he had. But by the time he would have served a second term and in his early 50s, no one knows how his health would have been.

JFK pushed for the Civil Rights Act – his death was a kind of catalyst for the 1964 act. Would it have been legislated as quickly if it weren't for his assassination?

Here, I think Johnson's success would not have been equalled by Kennedy for a couple of reasons: Johnson used him and his death as a very powerful emotional lever to get those laws through. Second,

WE DEMAND
DECENT HOUSING NOW!
WE DEMAND
AN FEPC LAW NOW!
MARCH ON WASHINGTON FOR JOBS AND FREEDOM
WE WANT FREEDOM
UAW

Johnson was a master of the Senate. He understood how it worked in a way that the Kennedys just didn't. As a southerner, a Texan, he was able to understand the inner workings of the Senate, and, following 1964, he had a kind of legislative - or, in your terms - parliamentary majority. He actually had the votes in Congress to get it through.

I also think Kennedy wasn't as passionate about Civil Rights. He came to it late, and Johnson had a kind of gut feeling that he could actually do this. That speech Johnson gave, the 'We Shall Overcome' speech in 1965, is, I believe, an honest assessment of what he wanted. Johnson said to the Congress - I'm paraphrasing: "I always thought as a young man that if I ever had the power to right this wrong, I'd do. I'll let you know a secret: I've got that power, and I intend to use it.'

Kennedy was more of a foreign policy president. If Kennedy could have avoided the Vietnam War at the cost of going easy on civil rights, he would have done it. We would've gotten there eventually, but more slowly compared to Johnson.

> "Johnson was a master of the Senate. He understood how it worked in a way that the Kennedys just didn't"

Warren Report issued
A year after the Warren Commission, which investigates the assassination of JFK, is established, the report is returned to Lyndon Johnson: it concludes that Lee Harvey Oswald and Jack Ruby had acted alone.
24 September 1964

US responds to Gulf of Tonkin incident
The war in Vietnam escalates rapidly as President Johnson uses the authority given to him by Congress to send in ground troops, starting with 3,500 US marines who land in South Vietnam.
8 March 1965

Richard Nixon elected president
Former Vice President Richard Nixon, who ran against JFK in the 1960 election, finally gets his shot at being president. His first term is popular: he negotiates treaties with the Russians, enforces civil rights and he is re-elected in a landslide victory. **5 November 1968**

The Civil Rights Act is legislated
President Lyndon Johnson uses Kennedy's death as a catalyst to push the Civil Rights Act of 1964 through Congress. The act outlaws discrimination against race, religion, gender, colour or nationality, in schools, work and public facilities. **2 July 1964**

Race riots across the US
The promise of a Civil Rights Act to end discrimination in the US, which never materialises, proves too much for America's black and ethnic communities. Violent and nonviolent protests explode across the States. **1966**

Watergate scandal
President Nixon's popularity takes a downswing early into his second term and, in an effort to fight his opponents, the Nixon administration tries to bug the Democrat headquarters, among other clandestine activities. They are caught and Nixon is forced to resign. **17 June 1972**

Kennedy re-elected
Kennedy runs against Republican Barry Goldwater and wins his second term in the White House in a landslide victory. Charisma and a tough stance against the perceived threat of the Soviet Union wins him over two-thirds of the vote. **3 November 1964**

JFK holds back from Vietnam
Reluctant to commit any kind of force to a 'land war in Asia', the USS Maddox and three Vietnamese torpedo boats enter a standoff in the Gulf of Tonkin, but ultimately nothing happens.
8 March 1965

US-Soviet tensions ease
With JFK holding back from further involvement in Vietnam and avoiding war with the North Vietnamese completely, talks open between the two major players in the Cold War and tensions ease. **1967**

Jackie Kennedy leaves John
After Kennedy's second term ends and Richard Nixon takes his place in the White House, the former first lady feels she has done her duty and informally separates from her unfaithful husband.
5 November 1968

Kennedy dies
JFK is in poor health by the end of his second term. His ailments finally catch up with him and he dies ten years after leaving office.
1978

© Press; Sara Biddle

What if…

ROBERT F KENNEDY HAD BECOME PRESIDENT?

His message of unity promised hope to a divided nation, but was it a promise he would be able to keep?

INTERVIEW WITH

© Tim Tate

Tim Tate

Tim is a multi-award-winning documentary filmmaker, investigative journalist and author. His 18 books include *The Assassination of Robert F. Kennedy: Crime Conspiracy & Cover Up* (2018). Tim is a Fellow of the Royal Historical Society.

With victory in the California Primary election, Robert F Kennedy became a serious contender for the Democratic presidential nomination. The crush of people listening to his victory speech at the Ambassador Hotel in Los Angeles on 5 June 1968 – many of them young and many of them Black – was a testament to the spark of hope he had ignited and the tremors of change rumbling beneath the political status quo. To the delight of supporters and the despair of opponents the prospect of another, very different, Kennedy in the White House was now one step closer.

What skills and experience would he have brought to his presidency? Was he in his brother's shadow?

Robert Kennedy was President John Kennedy's most powerful political 'consigliere'. As attorney general – an office he used to pursue his long-standing campaign against organised crime – his influence stretched across all foreign and domestic policy. He was, effectively, his brother's deputy, and the role immersed him in the country's most urgent problems at home and abroad. But it was the years following JFK's assassination that shaped him more profoundly. Often perceived as RFK's 'wilderness period' – out of power and crippled by mourning – between 1964 and 1967, he transformed from a ruthless back-room fixer to a passionate revolutionary who spoke out against racial and economic injustice.

What, if any, differences would he have brought to US foreign policy?

One word encapsulates the changes RFK would have made: Vietnam. He was not the only candidate arguing for an end to the war – his progressive-wing rival for the Democratic presidential nomination, Senator Eugene McCarthy, had championed that cause long before RFK got in the race. But Robert Kennedy's determination was just as great: in February 1968, he publicly promised to halt the meat grinder consuming thousands of young American lives, arguing, "The best way to save our most precious stake in Vietnam – the lives of our soldiers – is to stop the enlargement of the war, and that the best way to end casualties is to end the war." Had he fulfilled that pledge, the war would have ended six years sooner – saving countless US and Vietnamese lives – and neither Cambodia nor Laos would have suffered the large-scale carpet bombing sanctioned by Richard Nixon from 1969 onwards.

RIGHT
By 1968 Bobby had truly emerged from his brother's shadow

© Alamy

And if RFK remained true to the spirit of his 'wilderness years' speeches, the US would have adopted a more hostile approach to countries that oppressed their own citizens. In South America, he denounced the military juntas of Argentina and Brazil, and in apartheid-era Cape Town, he exhorted South Africa's white students to "build a current which can sweep down the mightiest walls of oppression and resistance".

Would his passion for civil rights and the championing of the poor and minority groups have been a catalyst for change or just sown more division?

The nature of America's political power structures means that presidents can only achieve their aims with the support of Congress. By the time RFK would have entered the Oval Office, segregation-supporting southern Democrats were moving further away from their party and closer to the Republicans. Although

Main image source: © Alamy, © Getty Images

LOS ANGELES
Ambassador Hotel
Kennedy

ABOVE The crowd in the Ambassador Hotel celebrated a significant victory

the tide of history was against them, they could have posed an obstacle to a more ambitious programme to enfranchise minority groups. However, earlier in the 1960s, RFK had adopted an innovative approach towards empowering deprived communities. Coupled with his willingness to recognise the fears of white America and his determination to confront the scourge of racial discrimination, it is a reasonable bet that his presidency would have achieved significant progress.

How would he have tackled corruption and organised crime?
There is little doubt that as president, RFK would have continued his crusade against organised crime. As chief Democrat counsel in the 1950s televised Senate investigations into the Mafia and its placement in America's unions, he helped expose violent extortion and endemic corruption by union leaders, some of whom had skimmed millions from the pension funds of ordinary workers to support their extravagant lifestyles. And the hearings also revealed close links between union bosses and the Mafia: what RFK would later call "a conspiracy of evil".

His efforts to break this conspiracy continued throughout his time as JFK's attorney general, and by 1968, he had begun to question the official account of JFK's murder, promising privately to re-open the investigation. There is significant evidence that had he done so, evidence of organised crime links – at the very least – to the murder would soon have emerged, further spurring his determination to tackle the webs of corruption that supported these racketeers.

As president who would have been RFK's greatest supporters, and greatest critics, and why?
Over 30 years, I interviewed many of those who worked with RFK and many who opposed him. What struck me throughout was the extreme polarisation of opinion. People either loved him passionately or loathed him wholeheartedly – there was simply no middle ground.

His greatest supporters were the poor and dispossessed: those whose lives were blighted by racial and economic injustice – the victims of America's unequal concentration of wealth and power. From the families he met, barely existing in shacks across the South, to those trying to survive in the urban slums of the north, to the California farm workers whose strikes and demands for economic justice RFK championed – these were RFK's most passionate believers.

His enemies were almost too numerous to count: as he remarked to a reporter, "You won't have any trouble finding my enemies. They're all over town." The political powerbrokers in Washington DC – Republican and Democrat alike – distrusted him, at best. The CIA had not forgiven him (or JFK) for their hostility in the wake of the Bay of Pigs; meanwhile, FBI Director J Edgar Hoover loathed RFK and had plotted against him. Across the US, his championing of civil rights, racial justice and the plight of America's

THE PAST

1961-63

POWER BEHIND THE THRONE

Daily Mirror
ON CUBA
BIG BLO
Mail
SKETCH
BLOCKADE
DAILY EXPRES
Kennedy:
CUBA

As attorney general in his brother's administration, RFK was a combination of back-room enforcer, personal shield and presidential advisor. Directly involved with the Soviets in the negotiations over the Cuban Missile Crisis, he had been the one to successfully advise a blockade of Cuba rather than the more confrontational option of invasion. But wielding such power so close to the president came with its dangers. By the time his chance for the presidency came, there were those who felt aggrieved by the way they'd been treated, ready to ensure his ride would not be smooth.

1963-68

HIS OWN MAN

Following JFK's assassination, RFK's political fortunes turned sour. At odds with President Johnson, his influence in the White House evaporated. He entered the Senate to represent New York and, never afraid to voice his views, the gap between him and the administration grew wider. He repeatedly denied he would run for the candidacy against Johnson. But with an escalation in Vietnam, the influence of his wife and friends, rising racial tension, riots and subsequent cover-ups of 'white racism' by the administration, he believed he shouldn't stand on the sidelines.

APRIL – JUNE 1968

DEATH OF HOPE

The year 1968 would see a double tragedy for civil rights in the US. Against a backdrop of running battles in cities between rioters and police, the civil rights activist Dr Martin Luther King Jr was a voice of reason and peaceful protest. He was assassinated on 4 April. By a twist of fate, Robert Kennedy was addressing a crowd in a poor, Black neighbourhood on the same day, and his speech was a eulogy for Dr King and all he stood for. Two months later, RFK himself was assassinated, and with them both died the hopes of a generation.

ABOVE Minutes after his victory speech RFK was mortally wounded

farm workers attracted the loathing of segregationists, white supremacists and some of the country's major agricultural leaders, while organised crime – both the Mafia and its allies in corrupt labour unions – were sworn foes.

When he was assassinated, how likely were his chances to become president?
Victory in the California primary did not guarantee RFK the nomination as the Democrat's candidate in the 1968 general election, but it went a very long way towards it. To beat Hubert Humphrey for the prize would require a floor fight and the support – far from certain – of an overwhelming majority of delegates and power brokers at the party's Convention in Chicago. But even if he triumphed there, would he have beaten the likely Republican nominee, Richard Nixon, and been elected to the Oval Office? His supporters were – and remain – in no doubt, and their view is endorsed by academic historians of America's presidency. To them, especially in the troubled and violent year of 1968, with America torn apart by race and poverty riots and with public anger at the ever-more catastrophic Vietnam War exploding onto the streets, Robert Kennedy alone seemed to be the candidate promising radical change – both at home and abroad.

That assessment was shared by RFK's opponents: during the course of my research, I located numerous long-suppressed LAPD and FBI reports and witness interviews. Each contained explicit threats by identified RFK enemies; each recognised that if he won in California, he would win the general election – and that, therefore, he had to be eliminated.

BELOW Kennedy campaigned passionately about civil rights and equality

What future events in US and/or world history may have changed with Robert Kennedy as president?
Counterfactual history is ineluctably coloured by the hopes of those who dare to risk the exercise. Above all, it is fraught with hazards since events never occur in isolation, and simply removing one bump in the historical road does not automatically preclude the changes that it caused. In particular, it is almost impossible to assess what Congress would have done with an RFK presidency. In a first term, let alone a potential second four years, would the Democrats have continued to control the Senate and House of Representatives? And even if they did, would Washington's long-nurtured hostility to RFK have obstructed him?

Given a fair wind, it is arguable that the US would not have endured the traumas of Watergate and the shooting of students at Kent State University; had RFK won, Nixon would have almost certainly never again wielded political power. Internationally, US support for despotic regimes would have been less of a global cancer.

Domestically, RFK was the last national leader able to command real trust from both substantial cross-sections of white and African American citizens. A Robert Kennedy presidency could well have moved the divided country significantly towards reducing the racial and economic injustice that still blights it today.

THE POSSIBILITY

1969-73

BOB V THE MOB

RFK was no stranger to confrontation when it came to organised crime and the exploitation of workers. Union boss Jimmy Hoffa of the Brotherhood of Teamsters had clashed with him in hearings years before, and the Mafia bosses were also his enemies. RFK's passion for integrity and transparency in politics was heartfelt, and there can be little doubt that his commitment to justice would have spilt over into his presidency. RFK's war on corruption would have continued, but this time with added presidential power.

1969

NO MORE 'NAM

The pivotal issue overseas would have been the Vietnam War. His view of America's place in the world was one of a democratic role model, and the war had fractured the nation. By early 1968, there were around 485,000 US troops in Vietnam, and 20,000 had been killed. RFK wanted a peaceful settlement, and the troops were brought home. Under the new President Kennedy, all of this would have been possible, thousands of lives saved and America's reputation for civilised common sense established.

1969 – PRESENT

RIGHTS FOR ALL

No RFK presidency would have been complete without an overhaul of the rights of all citizens, regardless of the colour of their skin or background. His belief in justice for all was unwavering, but he would need all of his personal grit to battle with an uncompromising system that was afraid of political and social change. Some form of compromise would have been needed, but by setting things in motion, the legacy of an RFK presidency may have been a very different, more integrated and more inclusive society.

All images: © Alamy, Getty Images

What if…

MARTIN LUTHER KING JR HAD LIVED?

Would he have been able to continue the fight and finally turn his infamous dream into a reality?

INTERVIEW WITH

© LBJ Faculty

Peniel E Joseph

Peniel is professor of history at the University of Texas at Austin; the Barbara Jordan chair in Ethics and Political Values; founding director of the Center for the Study of Race and Democracy; and associate dean for Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (JEDI) at the LBJ School of Public Affairs. He is author and editor of many award-winning books, including *The Third Reconstruction: America's Struggle for Racial Justice in the Twenty-First Century*, in addition to *The Sword and the Shield: The Revolutionary Lives of Malcolm X and Martin Luther King Jr.*

FAR RIGHT
Despite hopes that King would run for president, he never would have formally entered politics

RIGHT
King might have been able to sway Nixon's continuation of the Vietnam War

From the early 1960s, the fight against oppression, inequalities, injustices, and discrimination in the lives of Black and other non-white American citizens gathered pace, spearheaded by Martin Luther King Jr. Through his passionate, charismatic and measured public speaking – and courageous acts of passive defiance – the US, and the world, were beginning to listen. Undaunted by abuse, prejudice, ridicule and even imprisonment, his influence and determination to right the wrongs of America's tainted history opened the door to those at the very pinnacle of power, only for a life of such promise to be callously cut short. But what if there had been more time? With more years what might have been achieved to change America, and the world, for the better?

How do you think King's political influence might have grown? What alliances could have been formed, and would he have entered politics more directly, perhaps for a specific office?

Martin Luther King Jr's political influence was indeed growing in the spring of 1968 as he prepared a Poor People's Campaign to occupy Washington, DC. King gathered a coalition of Black, LatinX, Asian, Indigenous, and white Americans to demand a guaranteed income, living wage, freedom from hunger, poverty, racism, and violence. Dr King's anti-poverty and anti-racist organising dovetailed into his anti-war and anti-violence efforts. His credibility with young people, international anti-colonial leaders and organisers, and Black Power activists made him an increasingly formidable figure. On the eve of his assassination, King spoke at a rally in support of 1,100 Black sanitation workers who were on strike for a living wage and safe working conditions. Labour became another pillar of a coalition King forged with sharecroppers in the Deep South, welfare rights and anti-poverty activists in places like New York and Chicago, Mexican-American farmworkers, some connected to Cesar Chavez's movement, and poor whites from Appalachia. King would not have ever formally entered politics, although people implored him to run for president or vice president on an anti-war ticket in 1968. His political influence would have continued to grow, and his support would have aided a Democratic presidential nominee, perhaps Bobby Kennedy or Hubert Humphrey in the general election.

How might race relations in the United States have been different?

Race relations would have been different if King had lived to the extent that he would – into the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s – become a global political mobiliser in the age of neoliberal austerity ushered in under the Nixon, Ford, Carter, Reagan, Bush, Clinton eras. King might have been able to become the leader of a multiracial, although primarily Black-led, movement for social justice that kept issues of Black radical citizenship – not just civil rights and voting rights, but a living wage, food justice, equitable and racially integrated schools and neighbourhood, the end of police violence and state-sanctioned brutality and premature Black death. In many ways, the issues of abolition advocated by the Black Lives Matter movement – ending mass incarceration, and replacing systems of punishment with investments in health, wellness, housing, education, transportation, and environmental justice – were all of King's causes and would have become part of the mainstream sooner had he lived. The racial and political reckoning of 2020 might have come sooner with a figure like King capable of criticising the nation as he also sought to build consensus around Black citizenship and dignity.

Would he have been able to impact policy towards the Vietnam War?

King's activism impacted Vietnam to the extent that he illustrated the moral rot at the centre of the American Project at a time when few, with the exception of Malcolm X who did so as early as 1964,

Main image: Sara Biddle

THE WHITE HOUSE

THE PAST

1955-59

NO GO, JIM CROW

As a result of the 'Jim Crow' laws of the southern US states, which embedded Black segregation into society, in 1955, Rosa Parks is arrested in Montgomery, Alabama, for refusing to give up her seat to a white passenger on a bus. King was instrumental in establishing a 13-month boycott of the buses, with victory finally coming through a Supreme Court ruling that segregation on buses was illegal.

King was also establishing a reputation and presence on the world stage. In 1957, he visited the newly formed African nation of Ghana; two years later, he travelled to India.

1963-64

THE DREAM TAKES SHAPE

On 28 August 1963, King plays a central role in the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom. There are more than 200,000 people in front of the Lincoln Memorial to hear his 'I Have a Dream' speech. Next, he meets with President John F Kennedy and Vice President Lyndon B Johnson. The pressure from such action will lead to the foundation of the Civil Rights Act in 1964, followed by the Voting Rights Act in 1965.

King is declared 'Man of the Year' by *TIME* magazine in 1964. Later the same year, he is awarded the Nobel Peace Prize, stating that every penny of the $54,000 prize money would be dedicated to the struggle for Civil Rights.

1968

AN END AND A BEGINNING

On 29 March 1968, King led a march in support of striking sanitation workers in Memphis. It was while planning another protest for the workers that he was shot dead on 4 April 1968 on the balcony of the Lorraine Motel. News of his death resulted in deaths and riots in cities across America. President Lyndon B Johnson called for a National Day of Mourning to be observed on 7 April, and other events were postponed.

ABOVE Neither Martin Luther King nor the thousands he inspired could be ignored

were courageous enough to do so. King might have been able to impact Vietnam policy if Hubert Humphrey or Bobby Kennedy had been elected president in 1968. King might have provided that president with a middle ground between the hawkish continuation of the conflict (which did not end until 1975 and included Nixon's morally reprehensible bombing of Cambodia) and the immediate, complete, and peaceful end to the war that King longed for.

In what way might he have continued to influence others worldwide, and with what possible outcomes?

King's anti-imperialism critique of capitalism and advocacy of social democracy would have deeply influenced anti-colonial and indigenous movements for democracy, self-determination and liberation proliferating around the world. King would have been a game-changing environmental justice activist during the 1970s, one who could illustrate the intersectional nature of environmental justice movements, especially the ways in which climate change and environmental injustice impact Black and communities of colour. King would have been against nuclear proliferation, Soviet and Chinese-styled totalitarianism, and been for equitable peace in the Middle East. He would have strongly urged the freedom of Nelson Mandela and the end of South African apartheid while calling for the autonomy of African nation-states, freedom for newly independent nations in the Caribbean, Central, South, and Latin America, and for humanistic immigration reform in Europe and the US. His example may have hastened global freedom movements and helped to lessen ethnic conflicts and tensions that have led to war and violence.

What ambitions would he have had?

King's ambitions were to build a Beloved Community free of economic inequality, structural racism, war, and violence. He believed in redistributive justice, which is why he admired Scandinavian countries with their mix of free markets, fair taxes, and broad social safety nets. King would have wanted every American to have guaranteed income, a living wage, decent housing, health care, education, and equitable transportation. King believed in dignity and citizenship for all people, and he would have pushed for federal guarantees that offered resources to state, municipal, tribal, and other communities to ensure that this occurred

Legislatively, he would certainly push for an economic bill of rights and might have been able to persuade the Democratic Party of the 1970s not to jettison the Humphrey-Hawkins full employment bill, a proposal that had been an unfulfilled staple of the party for many years. He most certainly would have advocated for an increased minimum wage, the fair treatment of migrant workers, the desegregation of skilled labour, and a robust and multiracial labour movement, one that

“King could have gone toe-to-toe with Richard Nixon and the lies of his presidency”

included the Black folk and Brown folk working the meanest and dirtiest jobs for starvation wages in agriculture, poultry farms, meatpacking industries, as cooks, dishwashers, cleaners, in slaughterhouses, and as sometimes unpaid day labourers.

Would his legacy be the same or different had he lived?
A longer time on the world stage would have afforded King time to build a bigger economic power base for the movement through a member-based organisational model that relied on poor and working people's struggle for citizenship and dignity to self-fund a global movement for racial and economic justice.

King would have sought the end of poverty and the rollback of the Great Society and would have been a significant enough figure to challenge the FBI's COINTELPRO (Counter Intelligence Program) that led to the murder, arrest, and exile of Black and New Left political activists and organisers. He could have gone toe-to-toe with Richard Nixon and the lies of his presidency and the damage these lies did to the American people's faith in democracy. He would have sparred with Ronald Reagan and the racism behind the “welfare queen” slur and the cuts to social spending while increasing funding for the military, police, and jails. Finally, King could have crafted an alternative vision from the nostalgic dreams of the 1950s that looked toward the present and future and the pursuit of multiracial democracy, rather than fantasies rooted in an era of racial segregation and Jim Crow violence that he unhappily lived through.

Would Martin Luther King Day exist?
It might not exist as an official holiday. The holiday was produced in the 15 years after King's assassination – thus, if he had lived, it is safe to say we live in an America too partisan to pass such a holiday again, but who knows? Juneteenth as a national holiday seemed light years away until 2020.

But even without a holiday, King's legacy would have survived, endured and thrived in the minds and hearts of millions of people around the world. Our best example of this is the legacy of Malcolm X, who in so many ways remains King's legacy rival, adversary, and alter ego. Malcolm X has never received a national holiday but is celebrated in film, hip-hop, history books, pamphlets, sound recordings, and so much more. Without the imprimatur of a federal holiday or monument in the nation's capital, King would have still resonated within Black American and global culture as a prophetic figure: the American Apostle who, like the Old Testament prophet Moses, descended upon an unholy land with a kind of biblical force and power capable of bring his people – which he defined as the entire world – to the Promised Land, before being struck down by an assassin whose bullet might have killed the man, but is unable to destroy his dream.

BELOW
King's passion and honesty made an unequal world question itself

WE DEMAND AN FEPC LAW NOW!
WE MARCH FOR INTEGRATED SCHOOLS NOW!
WE MARCH FOR JOBS FOR ALL NOW!
WE DEMAND AN FEPC LAW NOW!
WE DEMAND EQUAL RIGHTS NOW!
WE MARCH FOR FIRST CLASS CITIZENSHIP NOW!
WE DEMAND DECENT HOUSING NOW!
WE MARCH FOR EFFECTIVE CIVIL RIGHTS LAWS NOW!
WE DEMAND AN END TO BIAS

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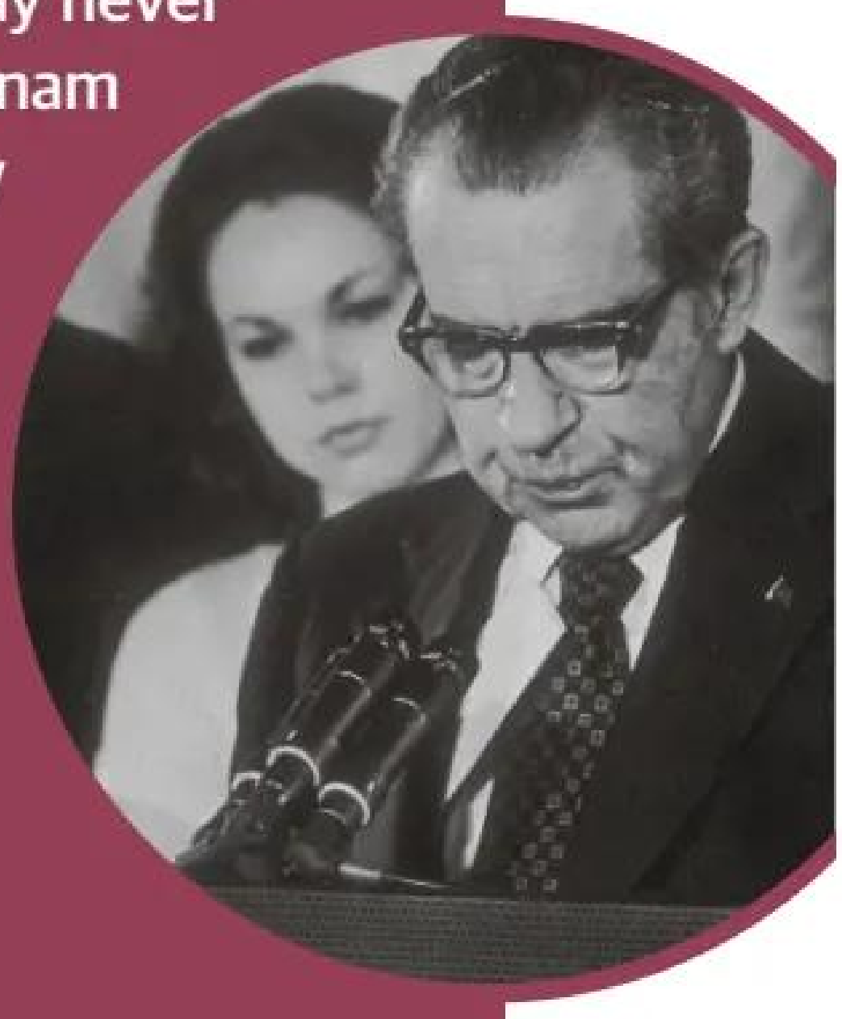
THE POSSIBILITY

1969

NO CHANCE FOR NIXON

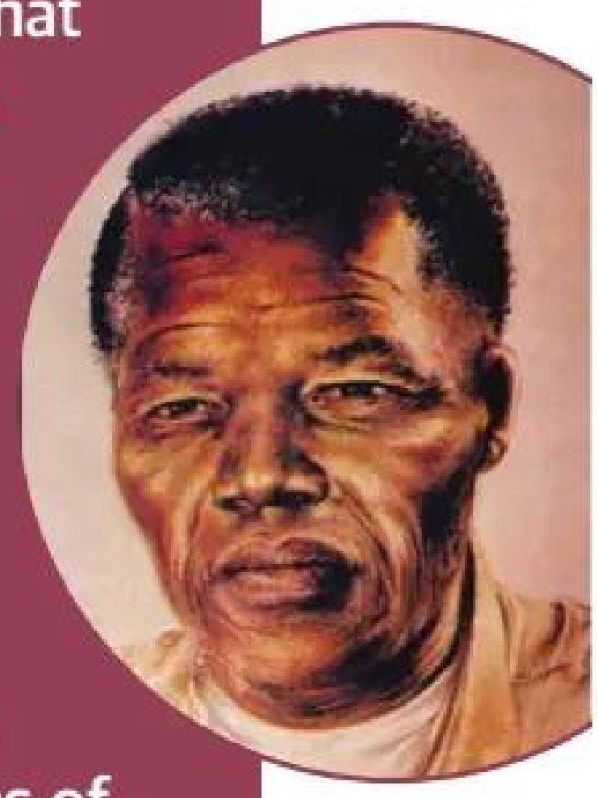
If King had lived, another Democrat president may have been possible. With King's support for either Kennedy or his fellow Democrat candidate, Hubert Humphrey, the balance may have tipped in their favour. Richard Nixon may never have come into office. The Vietnam War, which King opposed, may have ended far sooner. With no Nixon, and no contest for a second term, Watergate and the threatened impeachment and resignation of a US president would be erased from the history books.



1970

EARLY RELEASE

King was passionate about taking his message around the world. With apartheid in South Africa, and Nelson Mandela's imprisonment, it is almost inevitable that King would have used his influence to pressure the South African government for change. With a prominent world figure taking up the cause for equality, the South African government may have conceded defeat sooner. Mandela could have been released earlier to join King in the campaign, bringing the earlier release of Black and Asian citizens of South Africa from the unjust and inhumane historical shackles of apartheid.



1980S

UNITING THE WORLD

As a Nobel Peace Prize winner, King's global reputation was beyond doubt, gaining the respect of many world leaders. But given more years and more time to build on this, it is just possible that in a position such as the UN high commissioner for human rights, he would be in a position of strength and influence to openly challenge the many areas of inequality and injustice around the world; his drive, strength and voice making the difference needed to make the change. And who knows, Dr Martin Luther King Jr, UN secretary-general, would not have been as improbable as we might think.

All images: © Alamy, Getty Images

What if...

THE SOVIETS HAD WON THE SPACE RACE?

It's been famously explored in fiction, but what would *really* happen if the Soviets made it to the moon first?

INTERVIEW WITH

© Dr Christopher Riley

Dr Christopher Riley

Dr Riley is a writer and filmmaker who specialises in science, space, engineering and history. He has worked on numerous documentaries including *In The Shadow Of The Moon*, *First Orbit* and *Neil Armstrong – First Man On The Moon*. You can follow him on X @alifeofriley.

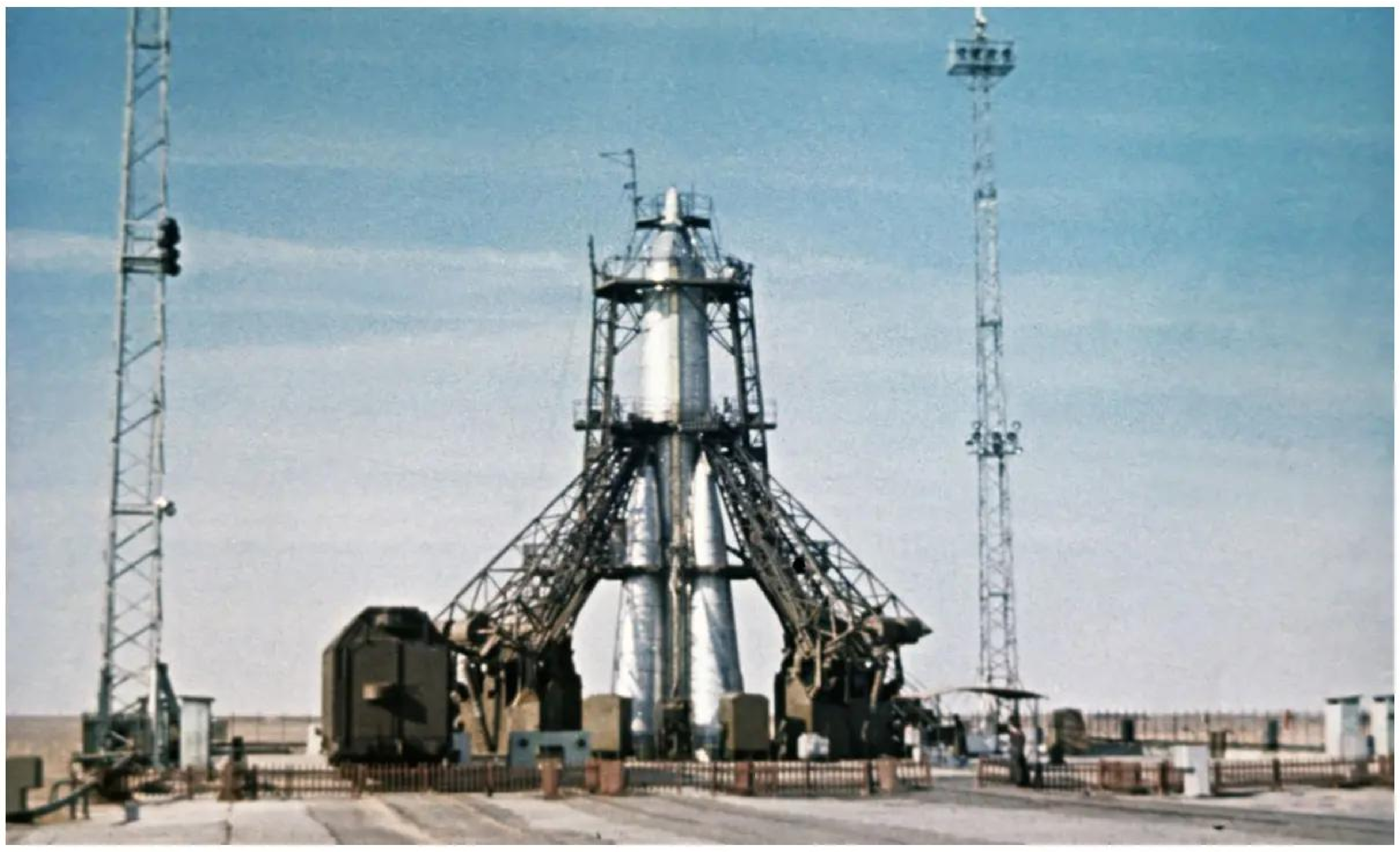
What would have happened if the Soviets had won the space race?
I think they would have perhaps established some kind of permanent lunar base in the way they colonised Earth orbit [in the 1970s and 1980s]. It might have been that they continued to run with a presence on the Moon instead of just going there for a few days and coming back and then never returning – as what has happened now. However, you've got to imprint upon the effect that the break up of the Soviets had on the space programme. That really caused a massive underinvestment, which might have led to any lunar base being abandoned – and we'd be back where we are today.

Did the successful launch of the Soviet Union's Sputnik 1 in 1957, the first man-made satellite in space, inspire America to reach for the Moon?
Undoubtedly. The 'Sputnik effect', as it's called, was a significant player in ensuring that Apollo succeeded. President Eisenhower commissioned the Saturn V rocket, and he boosted brainpower by investing in universities. I think Apollo made America smarter for that period – and the legacy of that was, of course, not just to win the Moon race but the spin-offs that happened. Not least the micro-computing processing revolution and, ultimately, the internet, of which the early DARPA structures were the forerunner, as they were all wrapped up in the Cold War investments the government had made. We've got our modern society to be thankful for because of that initiative, that 'Sputnik effect'. We're still living off that. It was profound, what Eisenhower did.

When was the moment that the United States took the lead in the space race?
The Zonds [Soviet spacecraft] were racing around the Moon unmanned in 1968, so I think you have to point to Apollo 8 [in December 1968], which was this very audacious and perhaps even somewhat reckless mission to pull off. Apollo 8 was previously just an Earth orbit mission, but they instead went straight [around] the Moon on the first Saturn V launch, which was a very, very brave thing to do. Ultimately, that bravery, that gamble that they somehow managed to pull off, was the turning point without a doubt.

Was there any other major turning point that happened during the space race?
The N1 disaster [the Soviet Moon rocket that failed five times] was obviously a colossal setback. But it wasn't just about booster technology; the Russians easily matched the Saturn V – they were ahead in booster lift for many years. But the clincher was the computing power: that is where the Russians were really falling short.

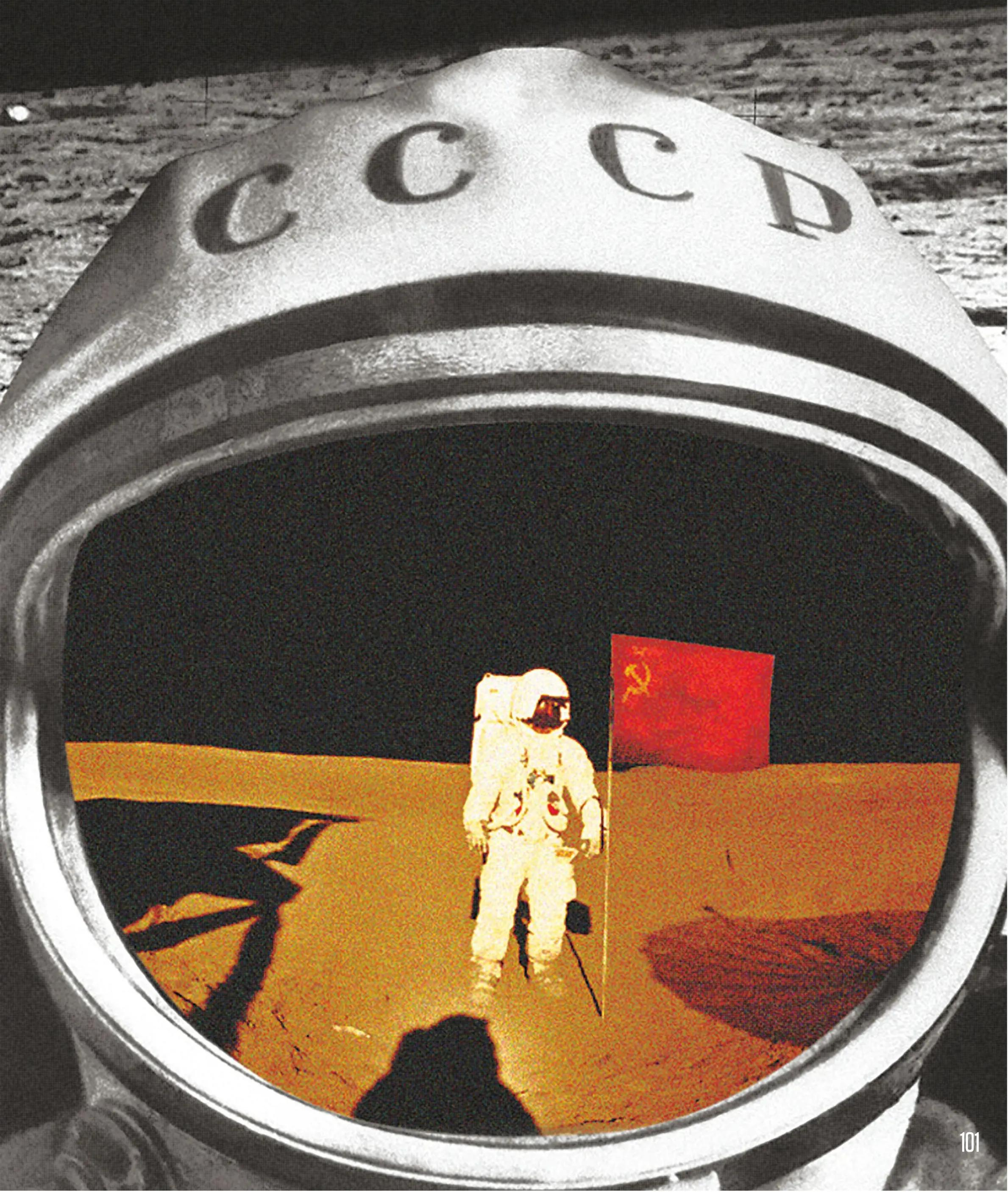
How far behind was the Soviet Union in terms of their computing power?
While the Russians might have been able to orbit the Moon, it was a far cry from landing on it. The thing that really clinched the success of Apollo, in no uncertain terms, was their computing power. The fact that NASA had invested significant amounts of money in the manufacturing of integrated circuits in order to create the micro-computers that were light and small enough to be able to fly on these [Apollo] spacecraft, and make these precise landings on the Moon. The Russians, as far as I'm aware, didn't really have that sort of micro-processing capability in those days. Their


Getty Images

FAR RIGHT
With better computer power the Soviets could have won the space race and put a man on the Moon

RIGHT
The Vostok rocket that took Soviet Union's Sputnik probe into space, and kick-started the space race

What if...
THE SOVIETS HAD WON THE SPACE RACE?



ABOVE
Soviet success in the space race could have spurred America into further space exploration and led to man walking on Mars

systems probably wouldn't have allowed them to really make a successful landing. It wasn't impossible, but it was quite unlikely.

Did the Soviets realise this?

I think they were just sort of gambling on the judgement of their pilots and hoping they could pull it off without this computing power. The Russian approach to spaceflight in the Sixties, both robotic and human, was a little bit of fingers firmly crossed behind your back as they launched. Everybody needed an element of luck. Luck goes hand in hand with skill and engineering when it comes to spaceflight, of course, but the Russians relied on luck a bit more, and the reason I say that is because they essentially ran for all these very quick firsts in human spaceflight in the 1960s. For example, they were the first to put three people in a capsule, and they only did that by depriving them of their pressure suits so they could squeeze them into a two-man capsule. Things like that were clearly a bit reckless with the way they went forward. While they probably were aware that their computing power was inferior to the Americans, I think they just thought they'd wing it and their pilots would hopefully be able to pull [a lunar landing] off just manually.

If they landed first, how would it have changed the Soviet Union as a whole?

Well, you've got to look at how they reacted to Gagarin returning [in April 1961] and Valentina Tereshkova [the first woman in space in June 1963] and the other heroes of spaceflight that placed Russia so high on the world stage. I think a successful returning lunar cosmonaut would have been celebrated and lauded around the world in exactly the same way. If you look at the 'Giant Step' tour that the crew of Apollo 11 went on in the summer of 1969 when they got back, 40 countries in 30 days or something like that, touring the world with millions of people coming out on the street and giving these ticker tape parades wherever they went, you can imagine that absolutely would have happened to the Russians as well. Whether it would have had a material change in the course of Russian history and how their society changed in the 1980s and 1990s, I don't know. It would have been great when it happened in the 1960s, but perhaps it wouldn't have made a big difference in the grand scheme of things.

Which Soviet cosmonaut do you think might have taken the first steps on the Moon?

Alexei Leonov's name often comes up as the first Moon-walker, having done the first spacewalk [in March 1965] and contended with those difficulties and survived the mission. I think he likes to think he would have been as well from his writings and interviews since – and I dare say he's right.

Would they still have proclaimed the Moon 'for all mankind' as the Americans did?

If you listen to Khrushchev's speeches at the time, they were all about how Gagarin's flight was for everybody. The whole point was it was a gift to the world, and it was Russia's great gift to human history, so they would have, I'm sure, done the same thing [on the Moon]. Whether they'd have taken a UN flag, which was proposed initially for the Americans to fly rather than the stars and stripes, or whether they'd have planted their own hammer and sickle, I don't know. I suspect they would have planted their own flag, but their speeches and plaques that they unveiled, I'm sure would have had the same sentiments [as Gagarin's flight].

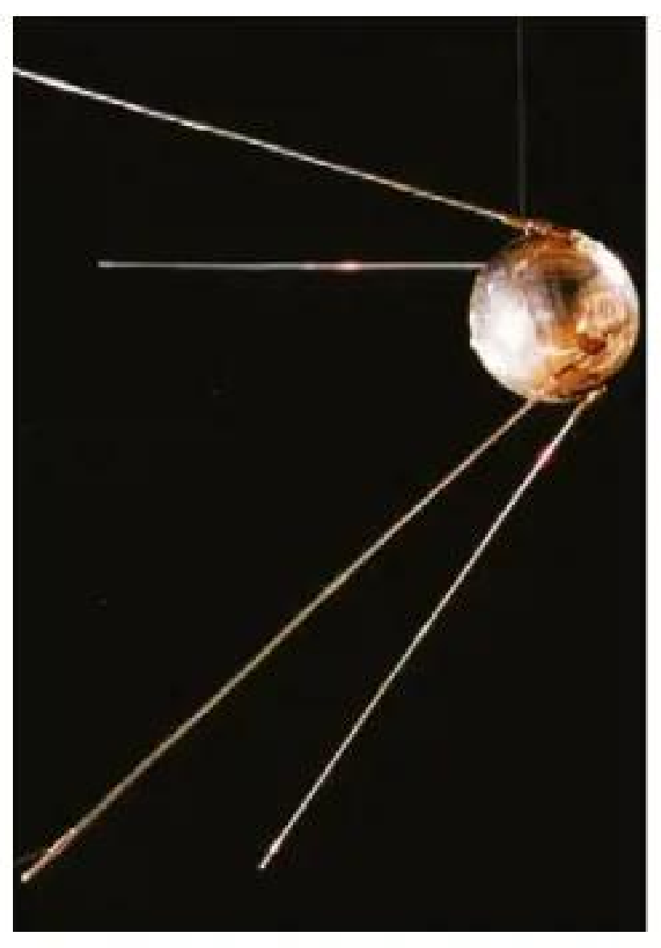
What might their first words on the Moon have been?

Well, [Neil] Armstrong was given complete freedom, as were all of the previous crews of Apollo 8. They decided what they would read or speak, and no one intervened. In fact, while Armstrong had obviously given it a lot of thought, he had a number of options from what his mother told me, and he made his final decision as to what was going to be said when he was going down

HOW WOULD IT BE DIFFERENT?

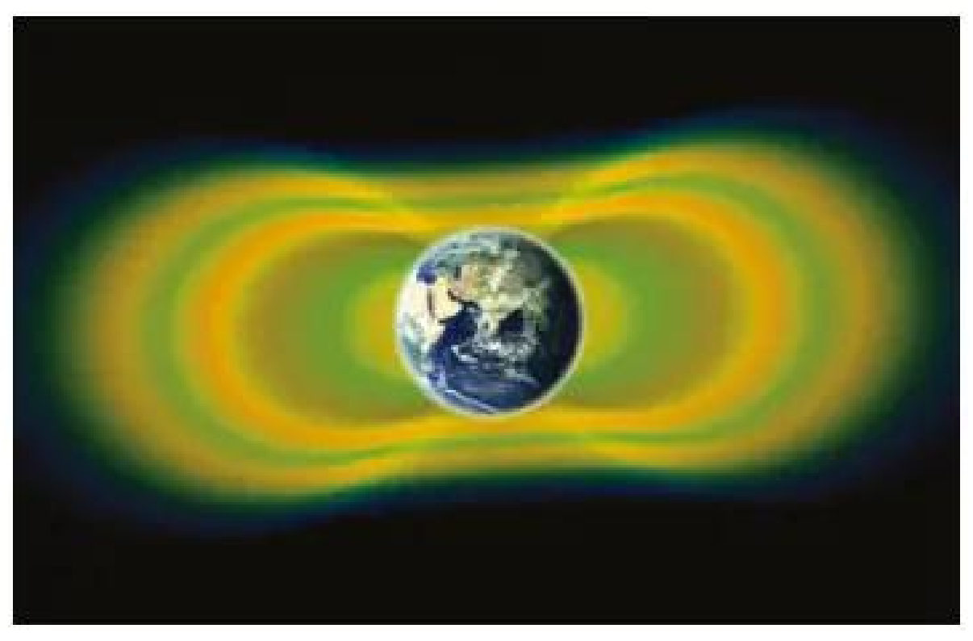
REAL TIMELINE

1957



First artificial satellite in space
To the shock of the United States and the wider world, the Soviet Union successfully launches an unmanned satellite, known as Sputnik 1, into space.
4 October 1957

Explorer 1
America strikes back at the Soviet Union with its own artificial satellite, Explorer 1. This satellite then discovered the Van Allen radiation belts that surround Earth.
31 January 1958



Eisenhower boosts brainpower
In a bid to prevent the US from falling behind the Soviet Union, President Eisenhower introduces the National Defense Education Act (NDEA) to increase education funding.
2 September 1958

First human in space
The Soviets get another first, this time sending the first human into space, Yuri Gagarin, just weeks before the US launches their own Alan Shepard.
12 April 1961

Saturn V launches
NASA's huge Saturn V rocket that will be used for the Apollo missions passes its first test flight with flying colours.
9 November 1967

Apollo 8
NASA must make a decision whether to send Apollo 8 on a manned or an unmanned flight around the Moon.
1968

Manned Apollo 8 launches
The three-man crew of Apollo 8 successfully launches and orbits the Moon, paving the way for a manned lunar landing.
21 December 1968

ALTERNATE TIMELINE

Unmanned Apollo 8 launches
The US launch Apollo 8 as an unmanned mission, delaying any eventual manned lunar landing, and allowing the Soviets to catch up.
21 December 1968

the ladder. I think with the Russians - knowing a bit about how their society worked at the time - it would have been very carefully written. There's a speech that Gagarin makes before he climbs in the rocket [on the first spaceflight in April 1961], and it's beautifully and poetically sculpted in terms of its message to the world, and it was completely written for him by the central government. I think it would have been a similar sort of speech that would have been written for the first lunar cosmonaut.

Do you think that a successful lunar landing broadcast to the world would have prevented the eventual collapse of the Soviet Union?
No, I don't. If you look at what it did to America, they won this race, and very quickly, the country got sick of spending money, and within a few missions after Apollo 11, the programme was cancelled. The political direction afterwards, both in positive and negative terms, was not really influenced by the success of Apollo, perhaps sadly. So, I suspect, in Russia, it would have been exactly the same. They would have had this time that they carried on running their bases, maybe on the Moon as we've talked about, certainly building a space station in Earth orbit, until effectively politics and perhaps society and the rest of the world overwhelmed them.

Would the United States have tried to one-up the Soviet Union by attempting to go to Mars?
It's nice to imagine that the race could have hurdled us down the Solar System to further away, and there's some sort of validity in that the Cold War had continued to sabre-rattle its way into the 1990s. Would America have gone even further to prove a point? It's possible. Remember Spiro Agnew, the vice president at the time Apollo 11 left for the Moon, said they were going to be on Mars by 1980! So there were plenty of plans; [American rocket scientist] von Braun's bottom draw had loads of concepts in it for adapting and modifying Apollo configurations to send them further. It's a lovely thought to imagine that with Apollo hardware, you could have actually had a human footprint on Mars by now.

Would they have succeeded in getting humans on Mars?
I don't know. I mean, it took four million human years to put those 12 Americans on the Moon - the work of 400,000 people for a decade. I think you could have multiplied that by 100, maybe 1,000, to land on Mars. It would have been very difficult to do, and it still remains so.

How would modern space exploration be different if a Soviet cosmonaut had been the first to take humanity's first steps on the Moon?
If - and this is an enormous if, and not one I think likely - the Russians had got to the Moon first, and the Americans had gone to Mars, I think we would have skipped the space station stage as it were. The [International Space Station] was largely conceived and built to justify the Space Shuttle, so we probably wouldn't have gone down that route. We would have just been pushing the frontier of human footprints across the Solar System, on and on. I think if we'd become as advanced as we are now and then changed this mindset from racing to collaborating as a community, we'd again be looking at a sort of equivalent to the space station - a laboratory, but somewhere on the Moon or Mars instead, rather than in Earth orbit. It would have ultimately been a completely different picture from the years of shuttle flights and space stations that we've lived through instead.

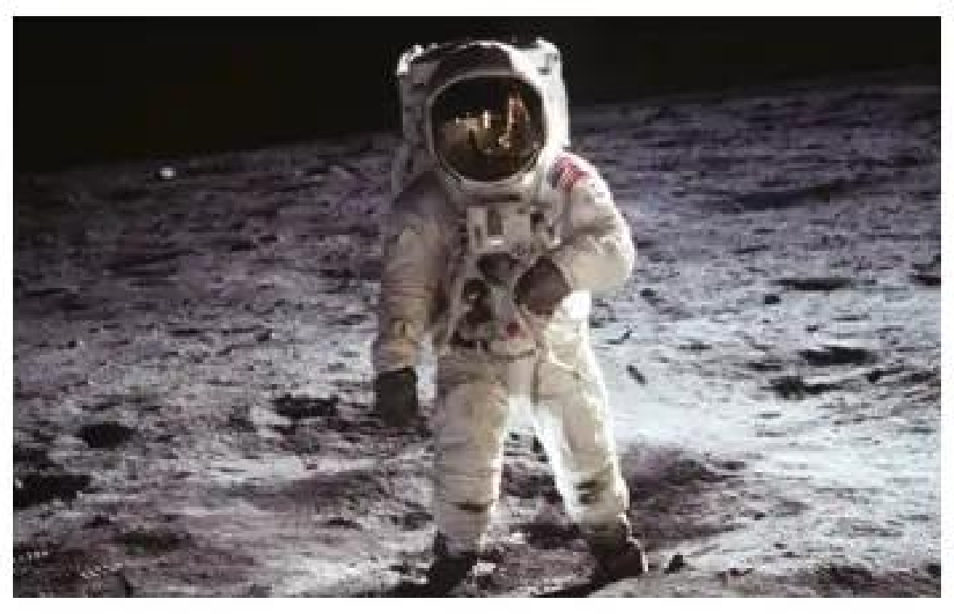
> “The International Space Station was largely conceived and built to justify the Space Shuttle, so we probably wouldn't have gone down that route”

BELOW
It's likely Alexei Leonov would have been the Soviet Union's pick for the first man on the moon

А. ЛЕОНОВ
A. LEONOV

The Soviets fall behind
The Soviet Union's answer to the Saturn V, the N1 rocket, explodes on its first launch and fails a further three times by 1972.
21 February 1969

A giant leap for mankind
Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin become the first humans to set foot on the Moon on the Apollo 11 mission, winning the space race for the US. Five more occur by 1972.
20 July 1969



Space stations
By the 1980s both the United States and Soviet Union (later Russia) have focused much of their efforts on space stations and missions to Earth orbit.
1980

International Space Station
The US, Russia and other nations continue to collaborate and operate the International Space Station in Earth orbit, but no humans have ventured further since 1972.
2013

Soviets aim for the Moon
Buoyed by the stagnation in the American lunar programme, the Soviets ramp up their efforts to send humans to the Moon, culminating in a successful test of their N1 rocket.
1969

Soviet landing
While the US debates the future of Apollo, the Soviets stun the world again by sending a single cosmonaut, Alexei Leonov, on a daring mission to the lunar surface, from which he returns a hero.
July 1969

America shoots for Mars
Still reeling from the Soviet space race victory, America attempts to one-up the Soviets, announcing their intentions to land humans on Mars. They ultimately succeed in doing this in 1980.
1970

Space colonisation
After four decades of exploration – and thanks to the collapse of the Soviet Union – the US, Russia and other nations collaborate on human exploration endeavours throughout the Solar System.
2013

© Nasa, Corbis

WATERGATE HADN'T BEEN UNCOVERED?

Nixon remaining in power could have led to a different result for the United States in the Vietnam War

EXPERT INSIGHT

© Patricia Morandini

Kendrick Oliver

Kendrick Oliver is a professor of American history and also director of The Centre for Imperial and Post-Colonial Studies at the University of Southampton. He specialises in the history of the US from 1945-1980, particularly modern political, social and cultural issues.

On 8 August 1974, Richard Nixon became the first US president to resign under threat of impeachment as a result of the Watergate scandal. It remains one of the most pivotal moments in the history of US politics. But what if he'd never been caught?

Nixon's first term had seen him act as a relatively liberal and progressive Republican. While this seemed like it might continue with the chance of health care reform, the fact he was considering scrapping the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) led some to think he might have swung more to the right.

"His intention to whittle down the EPA is often pointed to as a sign that he would have moved in a conservative direction," Professor Kendrick Oliver told us. "[But] there is evidence prior to the election that he was talking with Ted Kennedy about a sort of bipartisan approach to healthcare."

Things may have turned out very differently with Vietnam, too. While the Paris Peace Accord supposedly brought the conflict to an end in 1973, when US troops withdrew, the Soviet-backed North Vietnamese attacked, conquering the South in 1975. Had Nixon been in power, things might have turned out very differently.

"There are some who think that Nixon expected [the Peace Accord] to fail and intended to come back into Vietnam with a strong display of air power," said Professor Oliver. "[But] what happens is the Nixon administration is weakened by Watergate to the point that it was never able to get the response to the North Vietnamese incursions in the South, which led eventually to the fall of [South] Vietnam."

Perhaps one of the curious things that would have been different, though, was the public's perception of Nixon. While he was never 'beloved', there was an air of respect that was eroded by the Watergate tapes.

"One of the most embarrassing things for Nixon was the language he used," said Professor Oliver. "There were a lot of references to 'expletive deleted', and it became clear that this man, who sat happily with conservative values, was swearing quite a lot. He often engaged in anti-Semitic language as well. The tapes revealed this complex and dark character."

After Nixon's downfall, the Republicans shifted to the right, which might not have happened with a second Nixon term. "You wouldn't necessarily have seen a scenario in which Ronald Reagan was a successful candidate in 1980," said Professor Oliver.

HOW WOULD IT BE DIFFERENT?

REAL TIMELINE

1972

Watergate Hotel
Five men are arrested at the Watergate Hotel on suspicion of trying to bug the offices of the Democratic National Committee.
17 June 1972

Nixon re-elected
Despite being linked to the Watergate break-in, Nixon is re-elected in a massive landslide, winning 60 percent of the vote.
11 November 1972

The tapes
Following an investigation, the existence of Nixon's White House recording system is made public for the first time.
16 July 1973

Nixon's refusal
Nixon does not destroy the tapes but refuses to hand them over to the Senate Watergate committee.
18 July 1973

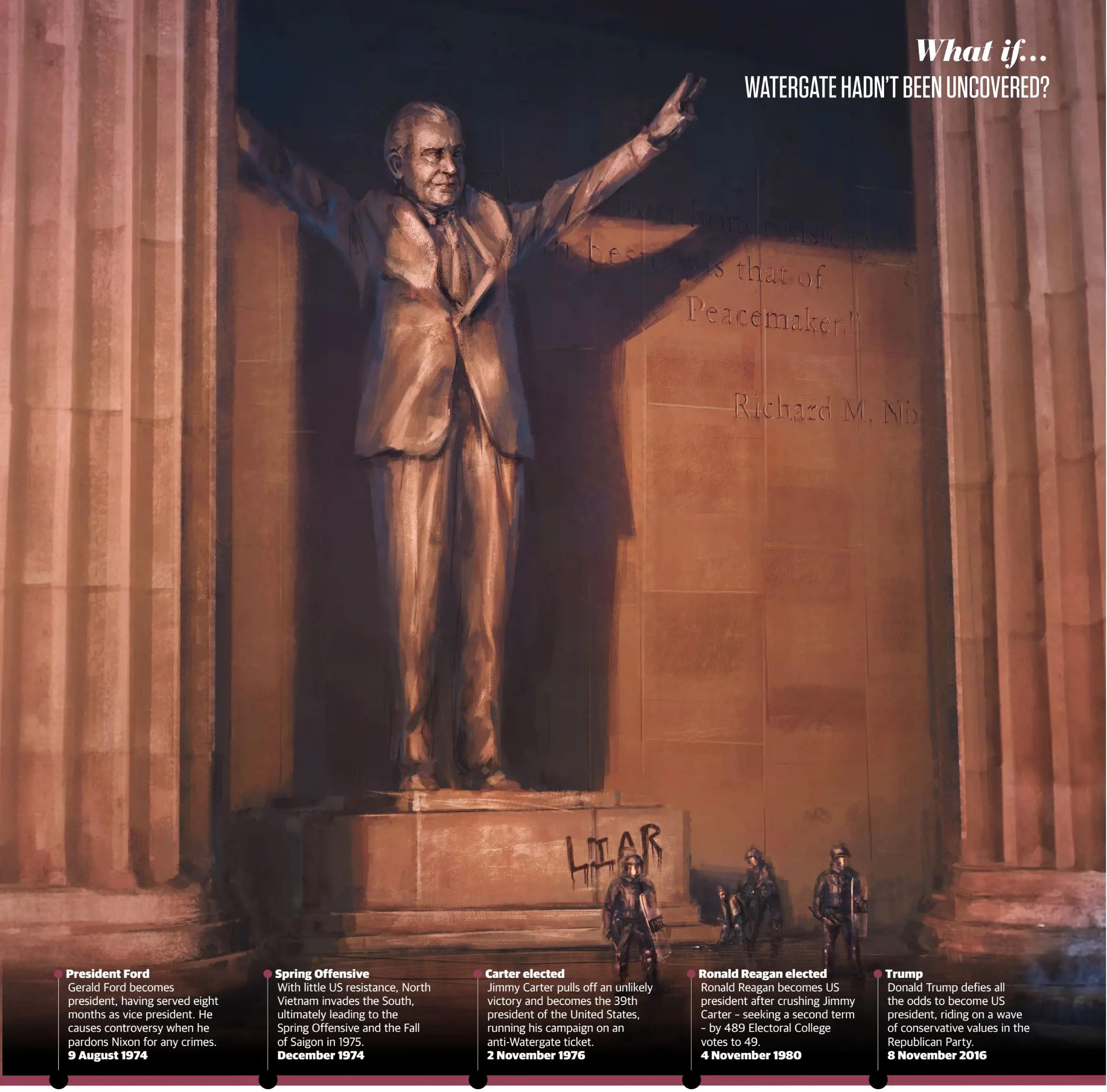
Impeachment
In an 8-0 ruling, the Supreme Court orders Nixon to turn over the tapes, implicating him in Watergate. Impeachment proceedings begin.
24 July 1974

ALTERNATE TIMELINE

Tapes burned
Before the Senate or Supreme Court can request the tapes, Nixon burns them, destroying any evidence linking him to Watergate. **18 July 1973**

Aides jailed
Although some of Nixon's closest aides are jailed, the president himself emerges from the Watergate scandal largely unscathed.
August 1973

EPA scrapped
Nixon axes the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) three years after its formation due to fears it was growing too powerful. **February 1974**



President Ford
Gerald Ford becomes president, having served eight months as vice president. He causes controversy when he pardons Nixon for any crimes.
9 August 1974

Spring Offensive
With little US resistance, North Vietnam invades the South, ultimately leading to the Spring Offensive and the Fall of Saigon in 1975.
December 1974

Carter elected
Jimmy Carter pulls off an unlikely victory and becomes the 39th president of the United States, running his campaign on an anti-Watergate ticket.
2 November 1976

Ronald Reagan elected
Ronald Reagan becomes US president after crushing Jimmy Carter – seeking a second term – by 489 Electoral College votes to 49.
4 November 1980

Trump
Donald Trump defies all the odds to become US president, riding on a wave of conservative values in the Republican Party.
8 November 2016

US re-enters Vietnam
Attempts by the North Vietnamese to expand into the South are met with swift air resistance ordered by President Nixon.
December 1974

No Spring Offensive
With a resurgent US, there is no Spring Offensive in Vietnam. The South never falls, and the North and South remain divided.
April 1975

Carter fails
Jimmy Carter loses his presidential election bid, with many voters citing his inexperience in office as a main cause for concern.
2 November 1976

Second term ends
Nixon ends his successful second term, leaving a Republican Party largely more liberal than it is in reality today.
20 January 1977

Reagan who?
With the Republican Party now leaning more towards the left, Ronald Reagan never gets the chance to run for president.
1980

Democrats in disarray
Struggling with a progressive Republican party, Walter Mondale's Democrats are forced to shift ever more to the left.
1984

Trump trumped
Without the rise of more right-wing views in the Republican Party, Donald Trump never becomes the 45th president of the United States. **2016**

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What if...

JOHN LENNON HAD SURVIVED?

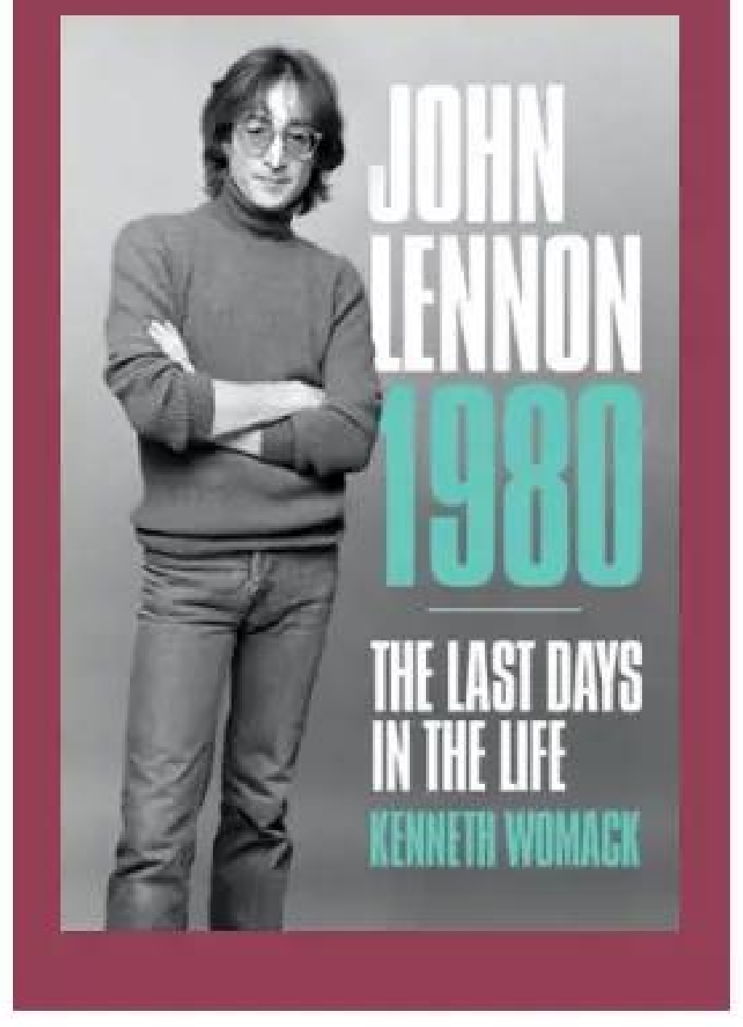
The music lives on to inspire new generations and the battle for peace remains as tireless as ever

INTERVIEW WITH

© Marissa Carney

Professor Kenneth Womack

Professor Womack is the author of numerous books about The Beatles, including *John Lennon 1980: The Last Days In The Life*. He is professor of English and Popular Music at Monmouth University in West Long Branch, New Jersey. He also hosts the *Everything Fab Four* podcast for Salon.com.



The murder of John Lennon was yet another example of a life so rich in talent, so passionate for peace, and so full of further promise, cut brutally and mercilessly short before that promise could be fully realised. Had he lived, there is no doubt that more of the world would have continued to hear his unrelenting cries for peace, been moved by his lyrics, and admired his humanity as he championed those in strife or oppression. So much was left unsaid, and things left undone, but what would a world with John Lennon still in it look like today?

How might Lennon have reacted to the media frenzy following the attempt on his life?

When we ponder the possibility of John Lennon having survived the terrible events of 8 December 1980, we must acknowledge a central tenet of his philosophy: that every life has meaning, and that violence has no place in our society. Having said that, I think that the media frenzy after his death would have been a source of great embarrassment, even disappointment for him. Lennon felt that The Beatles' most vital achievements concerned their music as opposed to their fame and celebrity. He had made it plainly known that he didn't want his passing in any way to resemble the tumult that surrounded Elvis Presley's death in 1977. The same would undoubtedly have been true had he survived that tragic night.

Lennon made it clear in his public remarks that our energies are better spent making sacrifices to better the lives of others. He and his wife, Yoko Ono, had planned to travel to San Francisco on 14 December to participate in a protest march on behalf of a group of Japanese teamsters who were fighting a powerful consortium of food importers and distributors. They had already composed a statement of support for the striking workers in California. "We are with you in spirit," the Lennons wrote. "In this beautiful country, where democracy is the very foundation of its constitution, it is sad that we have to still fight for equal rights and equal pay for the citizens."

A few days before his death, Lennon sat for an interview with *Rolling Stone*'s Jonathan Cott, who questioned him about his interest in inspiring people to find the best version of themselves. Lennon hastily replied that "it's still there", adding that he continues to believe in "give peace a chance, not shoot people for peace. All we need is love. I believe it. It's damn hard, but I absolutely believe it."

How might his personal music career have developed further?

A lot has been written about the mixed reviews associated with Lennon and Ono's *Double Fantasy* album, which had been released in late November, scant weeks before his senseless murder. At

ABBEY ROAD NW8
CITY OF WESTMINSTER

HOME SWEET HOME!

RIGHT
Lennon could have inspired new talent as a studio producer

FAR RIGHT
The artist would almost certainly return to his home town of Liverpool

Interview by David J Williamson. Main image source: © Alamy, © Getty Images

THE PAST

1960S

MANIA, MAGIC AND MAHARISHI

The Beatles achieved so much, influenced and inspired so many, and gave the world iconic songs that will live forever. And yet it was all so brief. But in that time, Lennon would develop from a pop idol to a serious campaigner. The music also developed; early rock 'n' roll became experimental projects. There were movies, honours and spiritual retreats. But such was the intensity of the journey that the inevitable happened. Each would go their own way, and for Lennon, that meant staying true to himself, the music he was ready to make, and the campaigns he was ready to fight.

1970S

NEW DIRECTIONS AND DEAD ENDS

Lennon and Ono faced their drug addiction at an exclusive London clinic before moving to the US. In 1971, Lennon started to once again flex his creative muscle with the release of the album *Imagine*, the title track quickly embedding itself into music history. Separating from Ono for a time in 1973 whilst living and working in Los Angeles, the album *Mind Games* was released. 1975 saw the couple reunite and the break up of The Beatles. They also welcomed their son, Sean, into the world, and Lennon decided to become a 'house husband'. In 1980, he released 'Starting Over' from the album *Double Fantasy*. It will be his last.

DECEMBER 1980

A FUTURE STOLEN

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Mark David Chapman, Lennon's killer, described himself as a Beatles fan. On the day that Lennon and Ono left their Dakota apartment in New York to go to the recording studio, Chapman was waiting, a copy of *Double Fantasy* under his arm. Lennon asked if he wanted it signed, and Chapman nodded. Later that night, the couple returned, and Chapman was waiting with a .38 revolver. He fired, and Lennon was hit four times in the back with hollow-point bullets. He said, "I'm shot" before collapsing. Rushed to Roosevelt Hospital, doctors tried to revive him, but his injuries were catastrophic, and he was pronounced dead. He was just 40 years old.

ABOVE
1980 saw Lennon with a new hit album and a bright future

ABOVE RIGHT
His campaigning would have remained relentless

the time of his death, the lead single '(Just Like) Starting Over' had broken into the top ten, with the LP poised to follow suit. But in contrast with his work in the early 1970s, the LP was moving slowly. It is important to remember that the late 1970s and early 1980s were a period of intense competition in the industry. The so-called rock 'n' roll dinosaurs – veterans like Lennon, Paul McCartney, Led Zeppelin and The Who were contending with an increasingly noisy marketplace in which disco, country crossover and New Wave battled weekly to establish dominion over the *Billboard* charts.

While pondering what might have happened if Lennon survived is the stuff of folly, I do like to imagine how *Double Fantasy* might have fared under different conditions. His assassination saw the album and two singles – '(Just Like) Starting Over' and 'Woman' – top the charts, with the record later earning a Grammy statuette as Album of the Year. If he had survived, I think he would have enjoyed a similar outcome, albeit differently realised. Lennon and Ono's notorious *Rolling Stone* cover shoot with Annie Leibovitz would have been left to do its work, undoubtedly moving numerous copies of the album in the process. The planned 'One World, One People' tour would have been the icing on the cake, with Lennon launching his first proper tour since The Beatles' 1966 American jaunt. The accompanying publicity would have been tremendous.

What influence, either direct or indirect, may he have had on the international music scene or a particular band or artist?

In the last hours of his life, Lennon completed work on Ono's 'Walking on Thin Ice' at New York City's Record Plant. Originally begun during the August 1980 *Double Fantasy* sessions, the composition had evolved into a discothèque-friendly six-minute opus, complete with Ono's eerie vocal sound effects, spoken-word poem and Lennon's wailing guitar solo. Lennon was ecstatic as he listened to the mix in all of its glory. "From now on," he told Ono, "we're just gonna do this. It's great!" Adding, "This is the direction!"

It is hard to imagine more incredible words from one of popular music's most impassioned and successful innovators. But there they are – "This is the direction!" I believe that Lennon would have leaned heavily into experimental, highly inventive tracks like 'Walking on Thin Ice'. He was rightly proud of the high-energy track, hoping to release it

WAR
IS
OVER!
IF YOU WANT IT
Happy Christmas from John & Yoko

in the new year and see his wife top the charts as a solo artist in her own right.

Could his relationship with the UK and his family possibly change?
After having spent years engaged in legal rancour to earn his right to stay in the US, Lennon had begun making plans to return to the UK during his final months. He had not been on English shores since 1971, when he first emigrated to New York. On the morning of *Double Fantasy*'s release in November 1980, he had started telephoning the folks back home. He hatched a plan with his half-sister, Julia Baird, back in Liverpool to make his triumphant return to the UK. Expecting his relations to come out in droves, Lennon suggested that they stage the reunion at the large family home at Rock Ferry in Ardmore. "There are so many of you," he told her, that "we will have to get together at Ardmore." He intended to travel back to his homeland in fine style – sailing on the Queen Elizabeth 2 up the Thames into London and making his grand comeback in the guise of a victorious conqueror. But he clearly planned to reunite with his extended family – the Stanley clan, especially – back in Liverpool.

Would there be an increased chance of a new Beatles collaboration?
A Beatles reunion would almost certainly have taken place. To put it bluntly, the money had simply become too big to ignore. In 1979, United Nations Secretary-General Kurt Waldheim attempted to stage a Beatles reunion as a charity effort on behalf of the Vietnamese boat people – the refugees who had taken to the high seas in order to make their escape from the war-torn Southeast Asian peninsula. Promising a $500 million windfall in the name of charity, concert promoter Sid Bernstein rallied to support Waldheim, taking out a full-page ad in *The New York Times* in which he entreated the Beatles to consider the UN's offer and its humanitarian intent. "The joy that you gave to people everywhere," Bernstein wrote in his *New York Times* treatise, "gives you a unique place in history. It also gives you an importance and a voice to make a difference in the lives of many human beings who need our compassion and immediate help."

Such causes would likely have eventually inspired The Beatles to reunite on behalf of human rights. Evidence suggests that The Beatles already had plans to reconvene. In late November 1980, Lennon was placed under oath in relation to Apple Corps' ongoing lawsuit against the creators of *Beatlemania*, who were planning to produce a movie based on the hit Broadway show. During his testimony, Lennon made special mention of potential future Fab Four output – in this instance, a documentary. As Lennon stated, "I and the other three former Beatles have plans to stage a reunion concert." Over the past several years, Apple Corps director Neil Aspinall had been compiling a documentary to be entitled *The Long And Winding Road*, which would have included a live performance by The Beatles as the movie's climactic scene.

What existing or new causes might he champion, and would he ever consider a formal role, for example with the United Nations?
When music lovers wax philosophical about what might have been had Lennon survived, our thoughts and concerns very quickly turn to the reigning social challenges of the day. Lennon would no doubt have taken issue with and action over the ills of Thatcherism and the rise of income inequality during the Reagan era. We need only look to Ono's steadfast work during her widowhood as a champion of peace and humanity to understand the myriad ways in which her husband would have maintained a significant voice in the fight for establishing a lasting peace.

THE POSSIBILITY

1980S/90S

PASSING IT ON

Lennon would have emerged as one of popular music's most innovative record producers. It would not have meant the end of his own career, but writing for others – inspiring bands and individuals with his talent and experience, and helping them to craft and polish their work – would have been him giving something back to the industry he knew so well. And, as technology developed through the 1980s and beyond, Lennon and Ono's work would no doubt have been buoyed by the MTV generation, creating iconoclastic and influential music videos as another outlet for their collaborative creative talent.

1980S/90S

YEAH, YEAH, YEAH

With Lennon still on the scene and his rift with Paul McCartney seemingly healed, the possibility of a Beatles reunion would have been more real. The anticipation for such a return would have been immense. The Beatles play Live Aid in 1985, or headline Glastonbury in the 1990s. Or perhaps their own very special concert in support of those around the world in need. Whenever and wherever it was, it would be the music sensation of the century that would reaffirm the band and their songs as perhaps the most iconic of all time.

1980S ONWARDS

VOICE OF REASON AND HOPE

Post 1980, John Lennon would not have been short of issues and events to campaign for, or against. Some of them would be familiar recurring problems – war in the Middle East, famine in Africa, human rights injustices around the world. And some, such as climate change, would only just be emerging as challenges that had to be faced. He may have accepted a more official role in the United Nations, or he may have chosen to follow his own path. Either way, Lennon would have served as a steadfast and much-needed champion of peace and nonviolence in the wake of events such as 9/11, the ongoing crises in the Middle East, and the embattled Ukraine.

GIVE
PEACE
A
CHANCE

All images: © Alamy, Getty Images

What if...

STANISLAV PETROV HAD NOT BEEN ON DUTY?

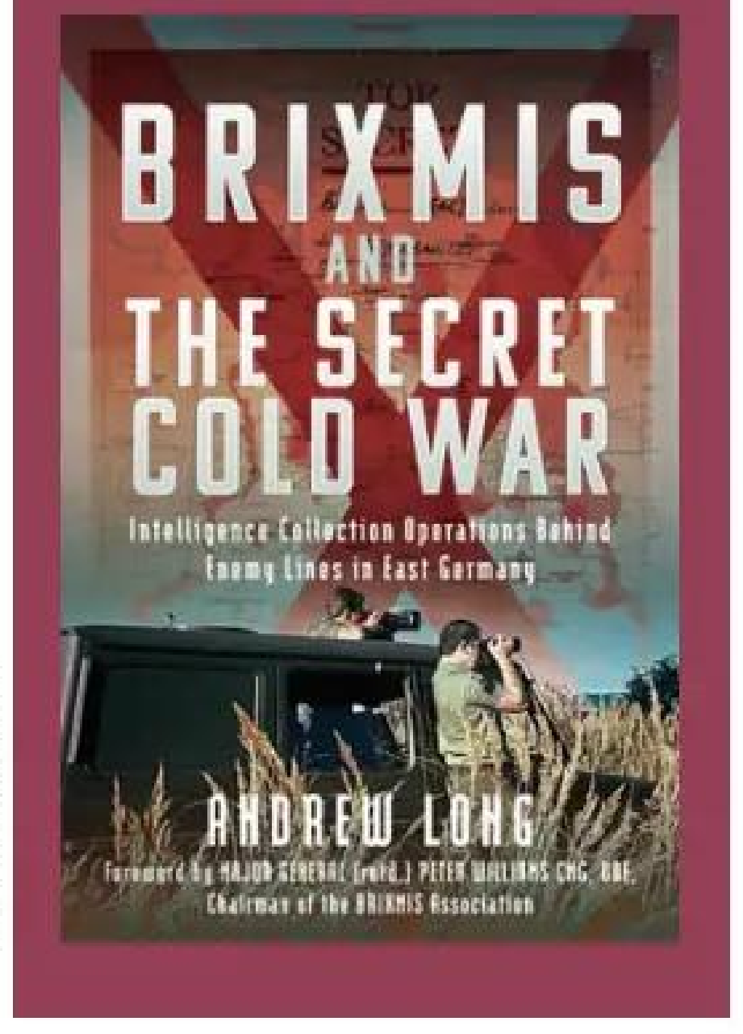
The perceptive Petrov correctly identified the 1983 False Alarm as a glitch. If it were someone else, things could have gone very wrong

INTERVIEW WITH

© Katie Long

Andrew Long

Andrew is a historian and author of six books specialising in the Cold War, especially concerning Berlin and the shady world of espionage. His latest book, *BRIXMIS And The Secret Cold War*, (Pen and Sword, July 2024), tells the fascinating tale of the British commanders-in-chiefs' mission to the Soviet forces in Germany and their intelligence collection role behind the Iron Curtain inside East Germany.



BRIXMIS
AND
THE SECRET COLD WAR
Intelligence Collection Operations Behind Enemy Lines in East Germany
ANDREW LONG
Foreword by MAJOR GENERAL (retd.) PETER WILLIAMS CMG, OBE, Chairman of the BRIXMIS Association

© Pen & Sword

FAR RIGHT
In the bunker Petrov had to make a split second decision

1983 was a year of heightened political tensions between the superpowers of the USA and the Soviet Union: grounded in the mutual mistrust and suspicions of the Cold War, fuelled by international events, and driven by a deadly competitive race to be the most powerful nation on the planet. Behind the scenes, in the shadowy world of military bunkers, satellites and radar screens, momentous decisions would be made. One man was to face a pivotal choice and make the right call. But what if it had been someone else on duty, whose training won out over instinct, following the protocols to their catastrophic end?

What particular Cold War tensions were rising in 1983?

At the time, most people were blissfully unaware of it, but 1983 became probably the closest the world got to nuclear war since the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962. A 'perfect storm' of international incidents conspired to raise tensions close to breaking point, and it was only thanks to the level-headed actions of a few individuals that the world survived to reach 1984 … even George Orwell could not have predicted how close it was.

Détente was a thing of the past following the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and the decline in Soviet leader Leonid Brezhnev's health following a stroke. The chairman of the KGB, Yuri Andropov, eventually succeeded Brezhnev in 1982, but by then, he too was unwell (he would die in February 1984). Andropov was a very paranoid man, convinced that the West (the Americans, in particular) were about to launch a pre-emptive 'first strike' against the USSR. In 1981, he set up Project RyAN, a KGB-led programme to anticipate a 'nuclear missile attack' (Raketno-Yaderno Napadenie) on the Soviet Union. Andropov harnessed the considerable resources of the KGB and other Warsaw Pact intelligence agencies to monitor a series of 'indicators' that could help predict when the West would strike. As the tensions built during the next year or two, RyAN became the highest priority for Soviet intelligence.

Andropov's nemesis was US President Ronald Reagan, who won the presidency on the back of a strong anti-détente, anti-communist platform. His hawkish views and willingness to plough money into the US military-industrial complex fuelled Andropov's paranoia. In response to the Soviet deployment of SS-20 IRBMs to Eastern Europe, NATO adopted its 'Dual Track' policy (carrot and stick, negotiation backed with military power) which resulted in the deployment of ground-launched cruise missiles and Pershing II MRBMs in 1983, prompting the so-called 'Euro-Missile Crisis'.

In March 1983, Reagan announced his Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI, popularly known as 'Star Wars'), which promised to intercept Soviet ballistic missiles in space before they could threaten US territory. The science behind this announcement was flimsy at best but caused near-panic in Moscow, which saw the strategic balance shifting dangerously to the West. Reagan amplified his hawkish reputation by calling the Soviet Union an 'Evil Empire' in a March 1983 speech.

In 1983 was an 'accidental war' more, or less, likely?

The Kremlin's paranoia was also fed by some very provocative moves by the US Navy during FleetEx 83, a huge naval exercise involving three carrier battle groups worryingly close to sensitive Soviet naval bases. The idea was to provoke the Soviets and see how they would respond, an extremely dangerous strategy with the benefit of hindsight, but by 'poking the bear', lots could be learnt. Extraordinarily, it included mock attacks on Soviet naval bases… imagine what the Kremlin made of that! Items were rapidly being ticked off Project RyAN's list of indicators.

On 1 September 1983, the situation worsened with the shooting down of Korean Airlines flight 007. The civilian Boeing 747 was en route from Anchorage, Alaska, to Seoul in South Korea when a navigational error sent them over Soviet Union territory. Unfortunately, it was the very same area that the Americans had 'violated' during FleetEx 83, and a regular destination for US spy planes, given the large numbers of Soviet warships and ballistic missile submarines based there. Soviet Su-15 fighters were scrambled, and despite identifying the aircraft as a Boeing 747, as opposed to the 707 used for reconnaissance, they shot the airliner down, killing the 269 passengers and crew on board, including a US senator. President Ronald Reagan described the incident as a 'massacre', a 'crime against humanity', which further ramped up tensions between the superpowers.

Interview by David J Williamson. **Main image source:** © Alamy, © Getty Images

What if...

STANISLAV PETROV HAD NOT BEEN ON DUTY?

THE PAST

1981

STAR WARS AND THE 'EVIL EMPIRE'

Reagan won the White House with strong rhetoric against the Soviet Union. They were the 'Evil Empire', the opposite of what America stood for. The Soviets had been falling behind the US in the technology stakes, and with the proposed Strategic Defence Initiative (an anti-missile system nicknamed Star Wars), the US would ensure the early destruction of the Soviet warheads before they could reach their targets. Mutual assured destruction no longer seemed mutual or assured. The Soviets started to see the US bogeyman around every corner.

1981–1983

OPERATION RyAN

Yuri Andropov, head of the KGB and future leader of the USSR, along with the rest of the Soviet hierarchy, were convinced the United States was planning a pre-emptive nuclear strike. Under the code name RyAN a huge information-gathering exercise began, using agents and resources all around the globe. They tracked the behaviour of those closest to the decision-making process for a nuclear first strike. So convinced were they of their suspicions it was to lead to tragedy. On 1 September 1983, a Korean Airlines plane was shot down by a Soviet jet after straying into Soviet airspace. The Soviet finger was already on the button and the slightest miscalculation could trigger Armageddon.

26 SEPTEMBER 1983

COMMON SENSE AND GUT FEELING

As an engineer, Petrov knew the system well. He also had the common sense to know what the Americans would not do. A single missile launch, followed by a further four missiles? It didn't make sense. He could have blindly followed protocols. He should have reported the alert as a real attack. He used his judgment, and he didn't. As a result, the world was pulled back from the brink of nuclear disaster, at least for now. Stanislav Petrov died on 19 May 2017 at the age of 77 in Fryazino. He received no official recognition for his brave decision from his own country, but the world owed him for his perception and bravery.

Was Petrov's logical thinking unique? Would someone else have just blindly followed orders and procedures?

On 26 September, alarm bells started ringing at Serbikov-15, a command-and-control bunker outside Moscow for the new Soviet air defence satellite and radar early warning system, codenamed OKO. This new computerised system was state-of-the-art, in Soviet terms at least, combining satellite imagery, ground-based radar and signals intelligence (SIGINT) to detect Western ICBM launches. On duty that night was Lieutenant Colonel Stanislav Petrov. Petrov, a 44-year-old systems engineer, did not normally run the command centre, but a colleague had called in sick and Petrov offered to stand in. Knowing the system intimately, he was conscious of its shortcomings, feeling it had been rushed into service at the expense of thorough testing.

Just after midnight, the system detected a launch of an American Minuteman ICBM, which was heading straight for the Soviet Union. With every alarm in the building sounding, and desperate controllers seeking orders, Petrov paused for a moment. Why would the Americans attack with just one missile? All the training scenarios had a first strike consisting of hundreds or even thousands of missiles, not just one. It did not make any sense. Ground radar was not picking anything up, which was crucial information to him. Knowing the shortcomings of the new system, Petrov quickly weighed up all the possibilities and concluded that it must be a false alarm. He instructed the operators to hold tight, and his decision was vindicated when no impact was reported.

Just when they thought it was safe to resume normal operation, a further four missile launches were detected by the system, plunging the command centre back into pandemonium. Petrov still did not believe this was the attack all the computers were telling him it was. The ground radar still had not seen anything, and with anxious staff staring up at the control room pleading for orders, and colleagues screaming down the phone at him, Petrov did what years of training and conditioning had failed to stifle – he thought for himself. Under extraordinary pressure, he did not see any reason to change his assessment from only a few minutes ago. A four-missile attack made no more sense than a single-missile attack – there was no logic to it, and with conflicting information and his in-depth knowledge of the system, he concluded it had to be another computer glitch, told the team over the intercom to stand down again, and called his superior to report another false alarm. This engineer, taking the shift for a sick colleague, showed extraordinary courage and presence of mind to stand his ground when the consequences of an error were incalculable.

ABOVE
Pershing II missiles could reach Moscow within minutes

Were the Soviets aware of any faults in their systems?

The whole situation was hugely embarrassing for the Soviet authorities. Their brand-new state-of-the-art system had proven to be unreliable – it was later found that the satellites picked up sunlight glinting on clouds and misinterpreted it as a missile launch – and their iron-clad command and control system had failed at a crucial point after Petrov used his common sense. The whole incident was quickly hushed up, and the authorities had to decide what to do with Petrov. Rather than congratulate him on his clear thinking and brave decision, he was disciplined for failing to keep a proper log of events during the crisis. Disillusioned by his treatment, Petrov left the military the following year and moved into academia – it was not until the fall of the Soviet Union that the story got out, and Petrov became a reluctant hero.

How much influence, if any, did Petrov's actions over the false alarm incident have on the response a month later to the Able Archer NATO exercise?

The drama that year was not over. In October, the US invaded the small Caribbean island of Grenada (Operation Urgent Fury) to put down a communist-led insurgency, which added a new layer of tension. The following month, the NATO command and control exercise, Able Archer 83, threatened to trigger a full-on conflict. Able Archer was an annual event which tested NATO processes for escalating a conventional conflict into a nuclear conflict. It was intended to be realistic and rigorous, and intelligence sources in NATO reported everything that was going on back to Moscow. The exercise had been planned for a long time and had a lot of moving parts, including moving troops around, mobilising NBC assets, and even practice-loading theatre nuclear weapons – just what Moscow had been looking for. No one in authority considered that after the succession of incidents that year and the building of tensions, this final exercise could be the straw that breaks the camel's back, prompting a military response from the Soviets. No one joined the dots. Thankfully, the exercise reached its planned conclusion, and the units involved stood down and went back to their normal routine. Although Soviet forces remained on high alert, the root cause of official paranoia, Yuri Andropov, died the following February, succeeded by Konstantin Chernenko, who lasted just over a year – Project RyAN was quietly forgotten. Chernenko's successor, Mikhail Gorbachev, was the reformer the country needed, and he helped bring the Cold War to a peaceful conclusion while at the same time causing the collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the great Communist experiment.

Stanislav Petrov died on 19 May 2017 at the age of 77, in Fryazino, a suburb of Moscow, where he lived alone in a small flat, surviving on a pension. He received no official recognition for his brave decision from his own country.

> "He showed extraordinary courage and presence of mind to stand his ground"

BELOW
Petrov's courage was never recognised by his own country

THE POSSIBILITY

26 SEPTEMBER 1983

FIRST STRIKE

Petrov is not on duty, but another officer is. He uses neither his judgment nor common sense and treats the incident as a real attack. The USSR would then have launched an immediate pre-emptive strike in retaliation for the American's phantom missile launch. In turn, the more sophisticated Western warning systems will have detected the very real Soviet missile launches and launched their own pre-emptive retaliatory strike, the so-called, and very controversial, 'launch-on-warning' policy, rather than wait for the missiles to arrive. The nuclear holocaust that would ensue is far too terrible to imagine.

1983 ONWARDS

MAD, MAD, MAD

There could be no winner of a nuclear war. Very few living things would have survived a nuclear exchange between the superpowers. These attacks would have triggered massive retaliation from the vast nuclear arsenals possessed by both superpowers, resulting in the mutually assured destruction that had previously kept the peace for so long. Tens if not hundreds of millions of men, women and children would have died as a direct result of the huge destruction caused by nuclear explosions. Some American military leaders boasted they could blast the Soviet Union back into the Stone Age. But in truth, neither side would have escaped such a fate.

1983 ONWARDS

NOWHERE TO HIDE

It was well known at the time that a nuclear exchange would have thrown so much radiation into the atmosphere that this would have blown around the world bringing what was called a 'nuclear winter' to the whole planet. Clouds of radioactive rain would have blown from continent to continent, crops would have failed, and people would have suffered from radiation sickness even in parts of the world like southern Africa, or Australasia, that had not suffered direct nuclear hits.

All images: © Alamy, Getty Images

What if...

ARGENTINA HAD WON THE FALKLANDS WAR?

Margaret Thatcher gambled on direct military action. But an Argentine victory could have left both her and Britain's reputation in tatters

INTERVIEW WITH

© Paula Fernley

Professor Richard Toye

Richard is professor of Modern History at the University of Exeter. He has published over 20 books, the most recent of which is *Age of Hope: Labour, 1945, and the Birth of Modern Britain* (Bloomsbury Continuum, 2023).

Following the Argentinian incursion into the Falklands, the move by Margaret Thatcher to deploy a military task force to retake the territory galvanised a nation. Britain seemed to be united in a patriotic fervour and single-minded belief that it had been deeply wronged and was taking action to show it was still a major player to be reckoned with on the world stage. Following the British victory and a hero's welcome for the task force, Thatcher would refer to the 'Falklands Spirit' for years to come. However, with a British failure in the South Atlantic, the global respect afforded Margaret Thatcher might never have materialised, and there could have been serious repercussions for Britain, at home and around the world.

What may have been the impact on global politics and Britain's reputation if Britain had lost?

This depends on the exact scenario. One possibility would have been that the UK's political and military leadership decided that action to recapture the islands was simply too risky and that it should just be accepted. Another is that military action was tried but failed – possible if the Americans had not given critical intelligence and logistical help. The first outcome would have been easier to survive than the second. Few people in Britain even knew where the Falklands were, and though the issue could not exactly have been brushed under the carpet, it would have been possible to try to manage it diplomatically and through economic sanctions. This was what had been tried after Rhodesia's Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) in 1965, and although the Rhodesian question became a running sore in British politics, it never brought down a government. Once a task force had sailed to the South Atlantic, though, the stakes were much higher. Defeat would have been reminiscent of the 1956 Suez Crisis (albeit that was a diplomatic catastrophe surrounding a successful military operation). In terms of global reputation, it would likely have confirmed impressions of Britain as a declining power with failed imperial pretensions. Certainly, it would have been harder for Thatcher (or any replacement prime minister) to present herself as a serious player on the world stage. Although Britain's impact on the end of the Cold War should not be overstated, Thatcher deserves credit for recognising Mikhail Gorbachev as a Soviet leader with whom it was possible to do business. She was also widely admired in Eastern Europe. It is hard to envisage things turning out quite the same way if Britain had recently experienced military humiliation, though.

What boost would a win have given the military dictatorship in Argentina, and how would that impact the country's future?

Victory would doubtless have given the Argentine Junta a significant boost, but equally clearly, it would not have solved the fundamental political, economic, and

ARGENTINE
TERRE DE FEU
Port Stanley
I^s Falkland
GRANDE-BR

Main image source: © Alamy

RIGHT
Falklands sovereignty has been disputed for more than a century

Falkland Islands
(Islas Malvinas)
~~(U.K.)~~
Stanley
Bahía Grande
Gallegos
Estr. de Magallanes
Tierra del Fuego
T.F.
I. de los Estados

THE PAST

PRE-1982

CLAIM AND COUNTERCLAIM

The issue of sovereignty over the Falklands Islands had been a matter of dispute between Britain and Argentina since the early 19th century. By 1833, Great Britain had established the islands, basically using gunboat diplomacy, as British territory. For more than a century, the dispute rumbled on in the background, an ever-present agenda item for British-Argentine diplomatic relations. In 1982, under the military Junta led by Leopoldo Galtieri, the voices grew much louder. Things were not going well at home for the generals, with eye-watering inflation and human rights abuses against their opponents. They needed a glorious victory to reunite the country, and their attention turned to the Falkland Islands.

MAR – APR 1982

THE OTHER SIDE OF THE WORLD

On 19 March 1982, a group of salvage workers raised the Argentine flag on the island of South Georgia, also British Territory. On 2 April, Argentina invaded the Falklands and later that month had 10,000 troops on the islands. Thatcher's government declared a war exclusion zone around the islands. On 5 April, a British task force led by two aircraft carriers set sail for the South Atlantic. By 25 April, South Georgia was recaptured. The sinking of the Argentine cruiser, General Belgrano, by a British nuclear submarine, kept most of the Argentine fleet in port.

1982-83

VICTORY AWAY GIVES VICTORY AT HOME

There were considerable losses of aircraft and ships on both sides, but Argentina could never create the dominance in the air to stop a land invasion. Following an amphibious landing, British troops started their assault. They faced a fierce and determined defence, but on 14 June, the Argentine forces surrendered. Success in the South Atlantic meant a hero's welcome on the return of the Task Force. It also assured victory for Thatcher and the Conservatives in the 1983 election. The reputations of both Britain and its prime minister were intact.

© Alamy

social problems from which the invasion was designed to distract. On 6 April 1982, around a quarter of a million people gathered before the presidential palace in Buenos Aires in support of the Falklands/Malvinas invasion. Yet they also voiced their opposition to the Junta. The opposition was determined to demand sweeping change once the war was over – whether it was won or lost. Triumph on the battlefield would have given the regime breathing space – but it would not have forestalled its probably inevitable collapse.

In short, a different outcome to the war would not have averted the Argentinian political instability that persists to this day. It is also interesting to ask, though, if the USA could have maintained better relations with Latin America had it not decided to back Britain – a move seen widely across the region as a betrayal.

What would a loss have meant for Margaret Thatcher and the Conservative Party?

Whereas acceptance of the situation might have been politically survivable, that was not Thatcher's style. Once she had committed herself to taking back the islands by force, her future prospects were inevitably tied to the operation's success. If it had failed unambiguously, she would have had to resign. The question is, who would have taken over? There were a number of able ministers in the Cabinet. Three of them, Willie Whitelaw, Jim Prior, and Geoffrey Howe, had been defeated by Thatcher for leadership in 1975. Of these, Howe, as chancellor of the exchequer, might have been the most plausible contender, but there could also have been wildcards such as the ambitious environment secretary, Michael Heseltine.

What, though, would have been the outcome of the ideological direction of the Conservatives? In 1982, Thatcher was in the process of converting the party to her brand of economics but still had to be mindful of the divisions between 'wets' and 'dries'. Howe was fully signed up to the free market agenda but might have lacked the force of personality to drive through radical change by himself. Defeat in the Falklands would certainly have strengthened the hand of those who had long been sceptical of Thatcher's approach, even though her economic policies would not obviously have been discredited by military failure as such. In other words, Tory divisions would have been exacerbated, and if Thatcher had remained on the backbenches, she would have had little incentive to hold her tongue.

ABOVE-LEFT
Margaret Thatcher staked her reputation on the Task Force

ABOVE-RIGHT
General Galtieri hoped victory would settle unrest at home

What public opinion issues would need to be managed in Britain?

The despatch of the Task Force was accompanied by an upsurge in jingoistic feelings. Defeat in the South Atlantic would surely have led to a sense of crushing disappointment, even betrayal, likely much encouraged by parts of the popular press. This was also a time of mass unemployment and considerable industrial strife. The loss of the war could have had repercussions for Britain's global economic standing,

BELOW
Captured Argentinian soldiers were repatriated

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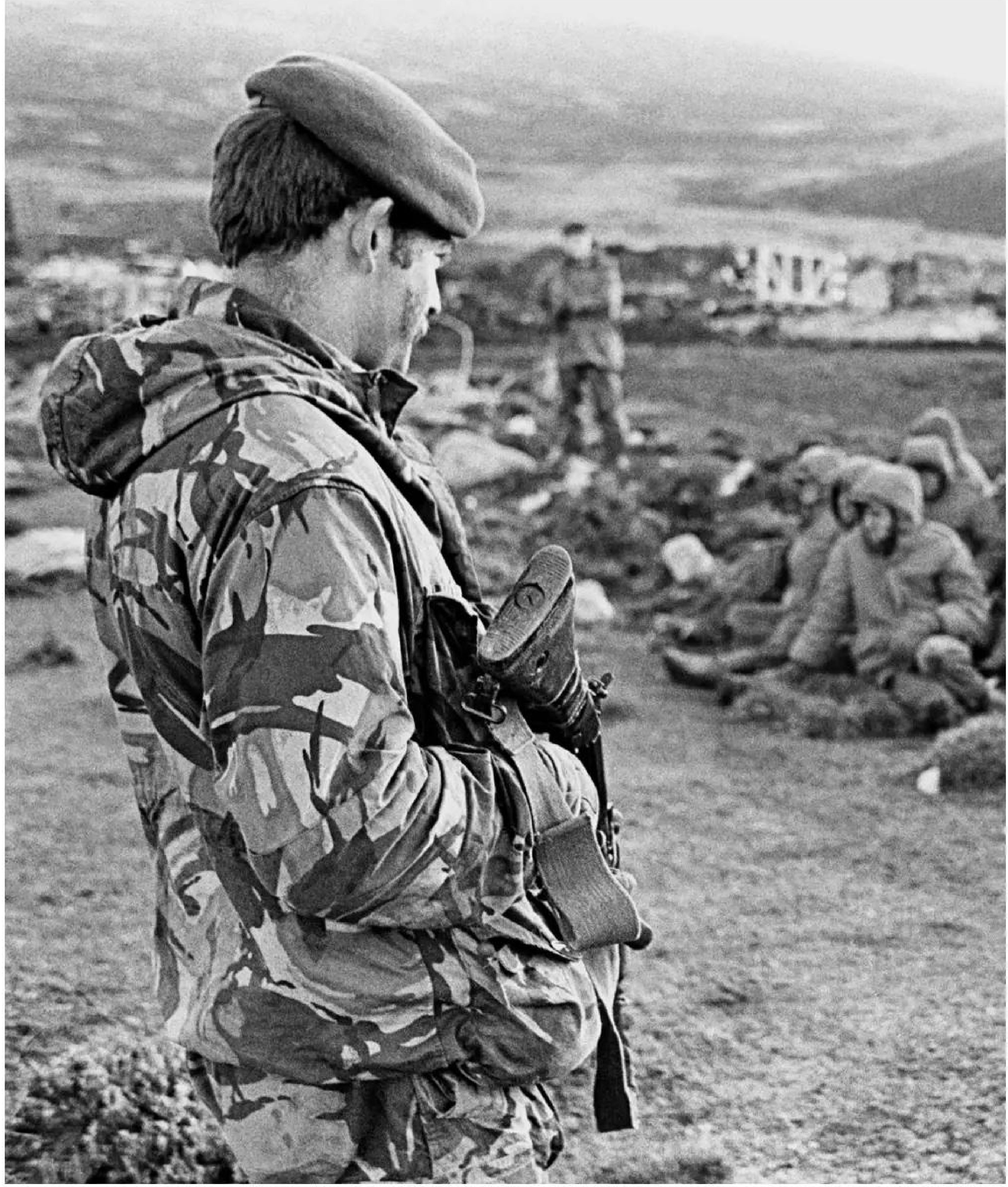

which would have made these problems even harder to manage. However, Suez offered a precedent for the Conservatives in how to successfully deal with a heavy reputational blow. Anthony Eden quickly stood down on grounds of ill health, and his successor, Harold Macmillan, moved quickly to mend relations with the USA while maintaining a world statesperson image which seemed to suggest that nothing very damaging had happened. Although it is difficult to see exactly how the same trick could have been pulled off in the conditions of the 1980s, the Conservatives have historically been very good at sustaining themselves in power even in spite of major crises and obvious failures. However, the loss of the Falklands would certainly have dented their reputation as the patriotic party, and a new threat might have emerged from the right.

Would a loss have meant Labour won the 1983 election?

This seems far from certain. The Labour Party was extremely divided, and its leader, Michael Foot, was not widely regarded as a credible prime minister. If the Conservatives had ditched Thatcher and adopted a more consensual style of politics, they might actually have increased their appeal. That said, the Tories would have faced an enormous challenge, and the prospect of election victory might have led Labour to act in a more united way. It could conceivably have squeaked a narrow majority.

> “The Tories would have faced an enormous challenge, and the prospect of election victory might have led Labour to act in a more united way”

However, there is another possibility. The Social Democratic Party (SDP) broke away from Labour in 1981. Before the Falklands, it rode high in the polls, and in fact (in alliance with the Liberals), scored a quarter of the votes in the 1983 election. If the Conservatives had been discredited by defeat, and if Labour had failed to solve its internal and policy issues, the SDP-Liberal Alliance could have been significantly strengthened. The first-past-the-post electoral system tends to favour the two main parties. This makes it unlikely that the Alliance would have been able to form a government in its own right unless its performance was truly spectacular. However, if the Conservatives, Labour, and the Alliance had all secured 33 per cent shares, the Alliance could have emerged as a potential kingmaker/coalition partner. Perhaps a Geoffrey Howe-Roy Jenkins partnership would have rendered the Cameron-Clegg coalition historically unnecessary.

How would domestic and economic politics in the UK have looked in the years after a defeat, and since?

Let us continue with the Tory-Alliance coalition scenario. The Conservatives moderate their policies, undertaking only a few further modest privatisations and tax cuts and making common cause with their Alliance partners in favour of European integration. At a further election in 1987, the Alliance emerges as the largest party, and Jenkins becomes prime minister. When he retires through ill health, David Owen, foreign secretary, enters No 10. When the Berlin Wall falls, he gains a temporary boost from the ‘peace dividend’. But his personality is too abrasive to maintain unity, and though he squeezes out a narrow surprise victory in 1992, the British people are tired of the politics of the centre ground and are instead looking for a new approach. The Labour Party revives and, in 1997, wins a landslide victory under an MP from the 1983 intake with radical left-wing credentials. His name is Tony Blair.

THE POSSIBILITY

1983

THE IRON LADY MELTS

It is unlikely, having staked so much of her reputation – and that of her party – on the defence of the Falkland Islands, that Margaret Thatcher would have been able to politically survive an Argentine victory. With loss of face and faith, in the eyes of the electorate, she would have become a liability for the Conservatives. At worst, it would mean outright defeat in the polls. At best, some form of coalition with the rising SDP party could be struck. But without Thatcher as leader, or perhaps even the Tories in opposition, pivotal moments in history, such as the Brighton Bombing by the IRA, may never have come to pass.

1981 ONWARDS

NEW KIDS ON THE BLOCK

Although the newly formed Social Democratic Party (SDP) was rising in popularity, it probably wouldn't have been able to form a government on its own. That's not to say it would not wield power. In alliance with the Liberal Party, it had shown it could attract votes. With a weak Labour leadership and a fractured Tory party, such an alliance could have squeezed enough votes to govern. If not, then a more traditional pact with either Conservatives or Labour as the power behind the throne would have meant ‘Thatcherism’ lost its focus and its relevance.

1984

SOFT LINE NOT PICKET LINE

With British social and economic policy taking a more restrained route, a number of things may have been different. Through the influence of more moderate voices – either from within the Tories or from coalition partners – the push for privatisation of public utilities may never have got off the ground. And industrial relations may possibly have been far more conciliatory. In 1984, the threat to the coal industry through pit closures dominated the news and the political agenda. Government and unions were locked in a war of attrition, and running battles on the picket lines have become a symbol of British politics of the day. But with a victory for Argentina in the Falklands, this time could all have been so different.

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What if...

CHERNOBYL HAD NOT BEEN CONTAINED?

Already the world's worst nuclear catastrophe, just how much more deadly could it have been?

INTERVIEW WITH

© A Leatherbarrow

Andrew Leatherbarrow

Andrew is the author of *Chernobyl 01:23:40; The Incredible True Story of the World's Worst Nuclear Disaster.* His latest book is *Melting Sun: The History of Nuclear Power in Japan and the Disaster at Fukushima Daiichi.*

Few accidents in history occupy the kind of legendary pop-culture status as the devastating Chernobyl nuclear disaster in 1986. With thousands killed or injured – by acute radiation syndrome among the first responders, and then later via cancer and other health problems among the wider populace – it's hard to imagine how it could have been worse. Chernobyl housed four of the largest nuclear reactors ever built, each with over twice the fuel load of a typical western design, which allowed it to disgorge a phenomenal volume of radioactive materials. But if we bend reality, ignore the 'how' and skip to the 'what,' it's interesting to see how events might have been different.

What catastrophic failings would lead to the Chernobyl disaster being worse than it was?

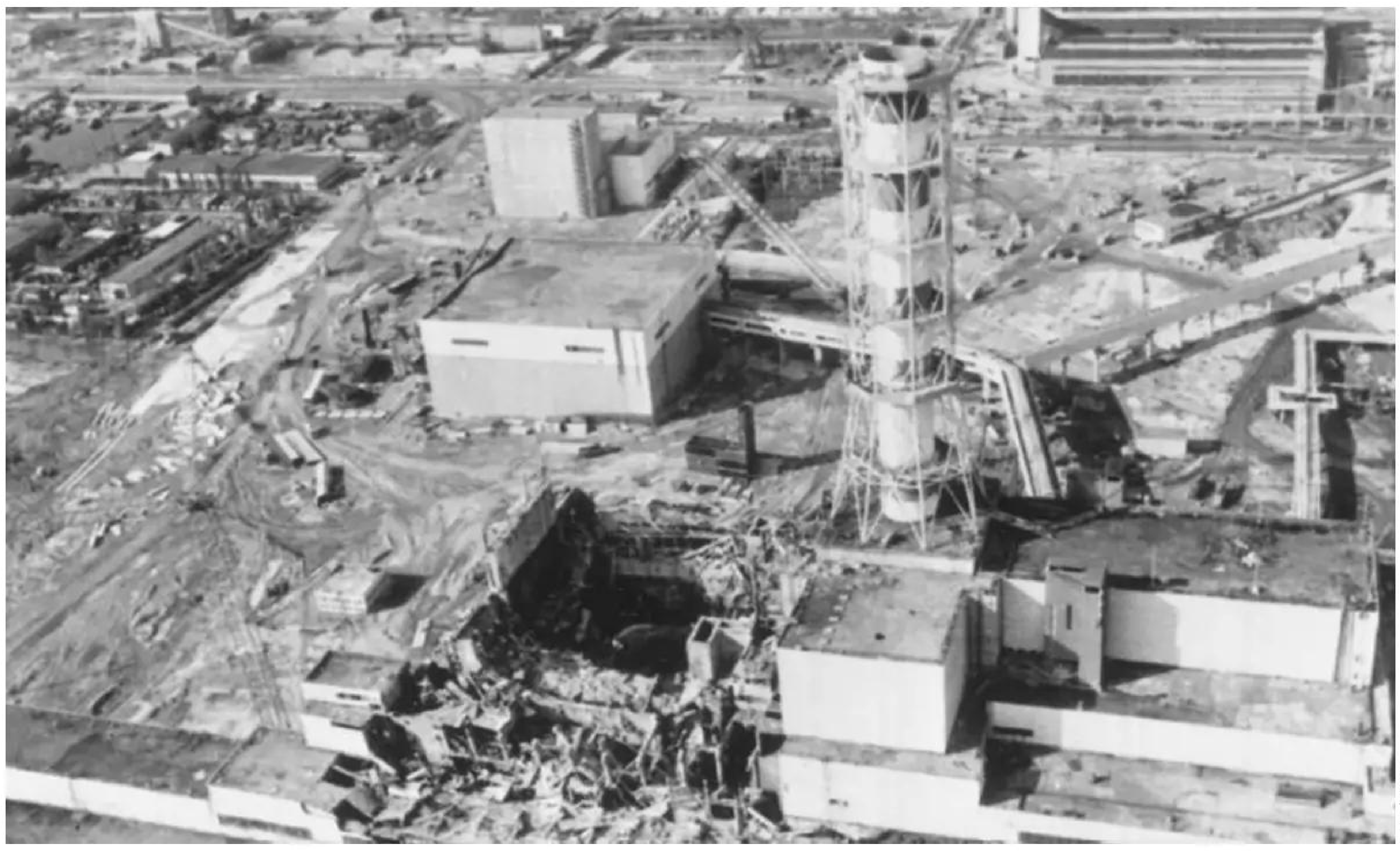
There are a couple of things that could have made it worse. Chernobyl's Unit 4 reactor building held an enormous tank of cooling water directly beneath the reactor vessel. In reality, plant workers worried that the melting reactor core could slump down into this tank and trigger an enormous steam explosion, far more powerful than the initial blast. They made a desperate bid to both drain the tank and smother the burning reactor fire by using military helicopters to drop bags of sand, lead and fission-dampening boron. Most of these missed the target, but if more struck home, they could have further dislodged the already damaged lower 'lid' of the reactor, allowing molten fuel to pour out and potentially into the undrained water tank. The resulting explosion wouldn't have vaporised half of Europe, as some thought, but it would have caused significant further damage to the already battered reactor building. The reinforced concrete structure would probably contain much of the blast, but it may have compromised the Unit 3 reactor housed inside the same building, and caused additional fires in the turbine hall, which linked each reactor building. If operators lost the ability to cool the decay heat of Unit 3, it could have potentially melted down and released more radioactive materials.

How would the Soviet Union's view of the world have influenced how it dealt with the catastrophe?

The Soviet political elite were always obsessed with appearances and presenting themselves as the best at everything, even back in the days of Lenin and Stalin. They were unwilling to admit any mistakes, wishing to be seen as equals to their capitalist peers, and Chernobyl was no different.

Local police and KGB agents quickly isolated the entire area, preventing ordinary people – and rumours – from entering or leaving. The western public only learned of what happened because winds carried airborne radioactive particles northwest, where they drifted over Belarus, Poland, Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia before being detected at a Swedish nuclear facility.

With an event as extreme as this, if it had been worse, the political response wouldn't have changed; there would still be the classic denials and downplaying typical of previous incidents. Gorbachev still enjoyed widespread approval, so there was no weakness on his part.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RIGHT
The explosion in Reactor 4 released deadly radioactive material directly into the atmosphere

What if…

CHERNOBYL HAD NOT BEEN CONTAINED?

THE PAST

FEBRUARY 1986

OVERLY OPTIMISTIC

Around 96 kilometres (60 miles) north of the Ukrainian capital of Kyiv and close to the Belarus border, the Chernobyl nuclear power complex has a much larger capacity than its western counterparts. With reactors three and four completed and commissioned by 1983, it becomes fully functional. Such is the pride and confidence of the authorities in the complex that in February 1986, Vitali Sklyarov, Ukraine's minister of power and electrification, states that the odds of a meltdown at Chernobyl are "one in 10,000 years".

25/26 APRIL 1986

FAILING THE TEST

Preparations are made to run a an emergency cooling system test in a scenario involving complete loss of power. Beginning just after 1.23am on 26 April, in less than a minute build-up of steam in reactor four causes an explosion powerful enough to rip a 1,000-ton lid off volatile fuel elements, releasing radiation into the air. Debris falls onto reactor three's roof, and several fires break out. First responder firefighters attending have no experience of radiation and wear no protective equipment. Reactor three is shut down at 5am, and reactors one and two about 24 hours later.

© Alamy

27 APRIL – 26 MAY 1986

TOO LITTLE TOO LATE

Emergency response teams arrive, and evacuations are instigated within a ten-kilometre (six-mile) radius of the complex. On 28 April, the Soviet Union admits an accident has occurred but gives little detail. Radioactive material from Chernobyl is detected at a Swedish nuclear plant, and the world is aware that something catastrophic may have happened. Incredibly, May Day parades still commence in Kyiv despite the huge amounts of radiation escaping from the plant. On 14 May, Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev speaks of the accident on national television. He mobilises thousands of military reservists to help with the clean-up operation. Many will die from radiation-related illnesses.

To see obvious changes, we must alter the wind direction, thereby changing where the radiation goes. If it blew east, deep into the USSR, the inclination toward secrecy would remain unchallenged for far longer because those particles would have to circle half the globe before being detected by a non-Soviet power. A devastating radiation release in Chelyabinsk in 1957 was kept secret for decades, and the politburo would attempt this again. After all, they went ahead with the May 1986 festivities in Kyiv days after the accident, pretending that nothing serious had happened a mere 100 kilometres (62 miles) away.

If things had been worse, what would the impact have been on things such as the region, the environment, the population, the numbers of dead and long-term sickness?

It's impossible to estimate health numbers in a worse accident, given that the statistics for the accident we did get are so contentious. In general, the world scientific community has found that the estimates made for Chernobyl in the late 1980s turned out to be quite conservative, and they no longer believe as many people contracted cancer from radiation as was initially expected.

However, there's plenty of leeway for speculation because only around three to five per cent of Unit 4's reactor fuel was ejected from the core. What if we make it ten per cent, or 15, or 50? The USSR undertook extensive measures to clean the local environment around Chernobyl, but increasing the intensity by this much will disrupt that.

At this level, using soldiers and bulldozers to decontaminate the area will probably be out of the question for vast swathes of northern Ukraine and southern Belarus, meaning more would have to be done from the air. Hundreds of pilots flew back from the Afghan War to drop coagulating compounds around the worst-hit areas, but the numbers required for a worse scenario would dwarf those and potentially put a strain on the Soviet VVS [the Soviet Air Force] presence in the Middle East. Airframes would quickly become contaminated beyond further use, and the military could be forced to dispose of thousands of helicopters within months.

It would also be impossible to enclose the stricken reactor building the way they did in 1986. Some new method would have to be devised, which could take years.

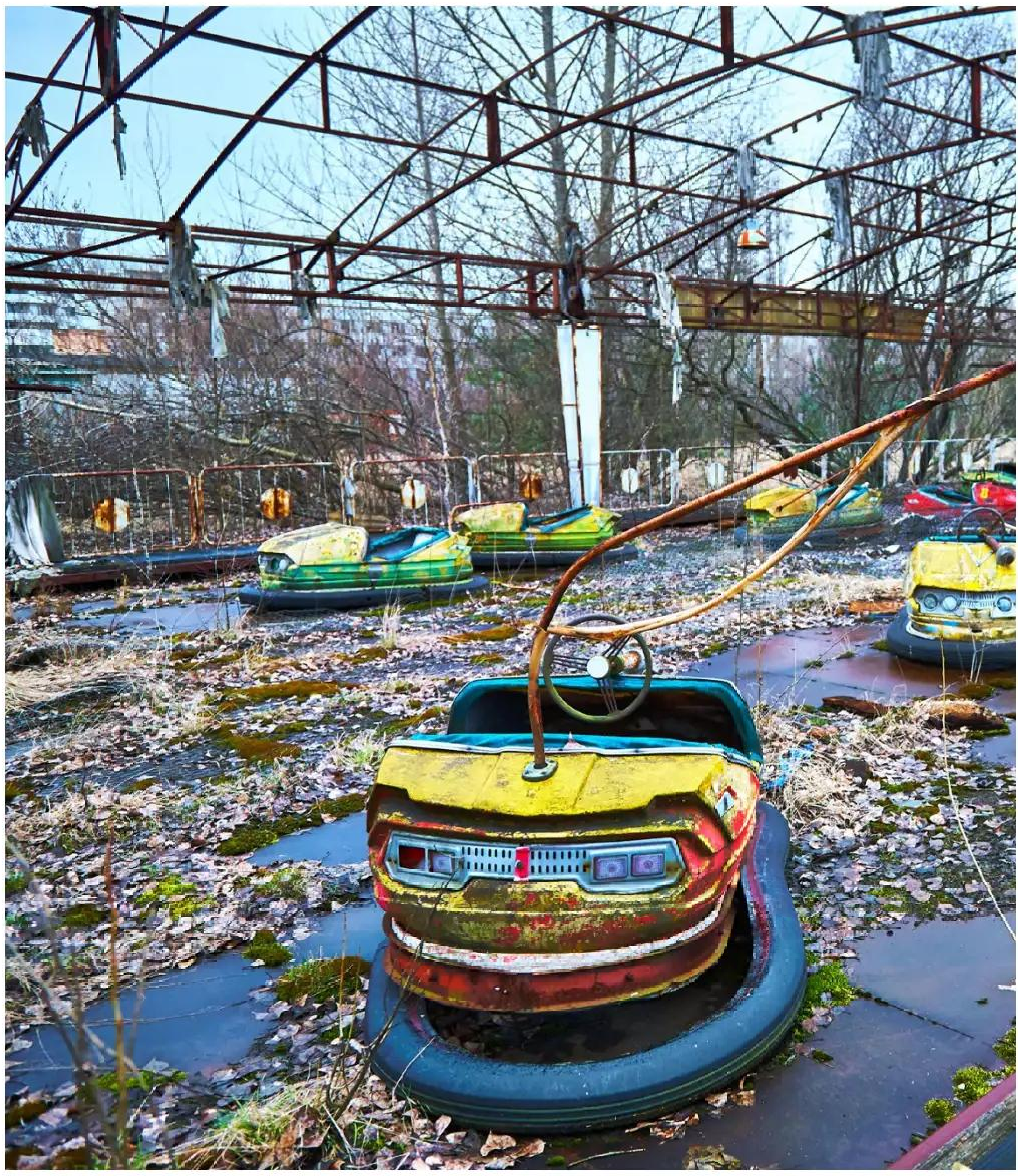
One positive change would be the faster evacuation of civilians. Faced with such extreme levels of radiation, and a dearth of personnel qualified to use the limited supply of dosimeters for mapping radiation dispersal, the authorities would have to move far more than the 135,000 civilians who were actually moved.

It may be decided to evacuate the urban centres closest to the dispersal path, although nowadays, this option is thought to often cause more problems than it solves. People imagine radiation is more harmful than it actually is, so it can be better to stay put. If governments (Soviet and otherwise) did evacuate, the numbers could reach into the millions if the wind blew south over nearby Kyiv, creating a refugee crisis for which the USSR was ill-prepared. With nowhere to go, most people would end up in camps, at least in the short-medium term, where their mental health would rapidly deteriorate, as happened at Fukushima in 2011.

How much land could have been impacted, and what would the global social and economic implications be?

The weather is the main limiting factor. If the accident had occurred in the rainy season, radioactive particles would come down with the rain without spreading too far. Unfortunately, it occurred in

BELOW
Residents had to leave where they lived, never to return



spring amidst glorious dry weather and hence spread far and wide. With clear skies and strong winds, the accident had the potential to contaminate most of Europe. Millions of square kilometres of agricultural land would have had to be sterilised.

If the winds blew south and east from day one, radioactive particles would more heavily contaminate most of Ukraine and Georgia, the USSR's main source of corn and wheat. Ukraine's fertile lands were critical to the USSR, which experienced food shortages throughout its existence and whose population had a diet heavily dependent on bread. Worse, milk drunk from grazing animals was the main source of human contamination in the months following April 1986. If the disaster was worse, it would prompt banning the consumption of milk and meat in affected areas, which, combined with the loss of grains and vegetables, could have spiralled into a famine. This would last for several years at minimum, though lessening each year. This is the only area where Gorbachev might have swallowed his pride and asked for western aid.

Refugees would probably have fled into Europe in numbers impossible to contain. Such a mass migration could have fractured the Soviet Union earlier than what happened in reality.

> “The Soviet political elite were always obsessed with appearances and presenting themselves as the best at everything”

What extra action for containment could the world powers take?
Probably none that they didn't take anyway. The Cold War may have been thawing, but it was still frosty in 1986. Affected governments could intensify decontamination efforts, but beyond diplomatic pressure, they'd be powerless to force the USSR to do anything, lest they risk military escalation.

What would the future of nuclear power look like after such a disaster?
Excitement for nuclear power had already nose-dived since the optimism of the 1950s. Orders for new reactors in the US slowed to a trickle after the Three Mile Island accident frightened half the population of Pennsylvania in 1979, and Chernobyl all but closed the taps. The move to cleaner and greener renewable energy was still many years away.

It's possible that a significantly worse accident could have galvanised popular opposition to nuclear energy and ended its use, but given the vast differences between the USSR and the west – politically, culturally and scientifically; differences that were emphasised at the time to argue against this exact outcome – it seems almost impossible. More European powers may have converted back to coal sooner, but the US would continue to place its faith in oil and coal.

BELOW
The first responder firefighters were woefully ill-equipped and unprepared

THE POSSIBILITY

1986-91

EMPTY BREAD BASKET

Had much more radioactive material leaked, and very different weather conditions had been in place, the possibility of a far wider – and more densely populated – region being directly affected would see the fertile state of Ukraine reduced to a barren wasteland. Crops would fail, livestock and their produce contaminated, and the Soviet people, who rely so heavily on Ukraine to keep it fed, left in desperation as to how they will survive the catastrophe. With such a huge blow to the internal economy, the big question would be whether the ice curtain of the Cold War would thaw sufficiently for the USSR to ask for international aid.

1986-87

A TRAGIC TIDE

The scale and speed of response would be a lesson learned: not only to the danger from the reactor but also to the evacuation of the population. Potentially thousands of lives could be saved from the death sentence of radiation sickness if more were evacuated. But such a huge displacement of people would bring its own problems. Where would they go, and how far? Political borders are of no interest to those desperate to survive, but with hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of radiation refugees, migrating into other parts of Russia and Europe, political decisions for their welfare would have to be made.

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1986 ONWARDS

DIG… DIG… DIG

Championed as a clean and efficient source of energy, the harnessing of nuclear power was endorsed by nations around the world. But following such a tragic disaster, the silent nuclear threat becomes all too apparent, and confidence drops like a stone. The threat of global warming and the use of clean, renewable energy are, in the 1980s, almost inaudible whispers compared to the roars of the oil and coal industries. Nuclear power is a gamble for politicians, a roll of the dice that can end in thousands of deaths. Fossil fuels win; more coal is dug, and more oil is drilled. Any thoughts of the threat to the planet are for the future, for someone else.

What if...

THE BERLIN WALL NEVER FELL?

Explore how long a divided Germany could last in the face of a crumbling USSR

INTERVIEW WITH

© Fred Taylor

Fred Taylor

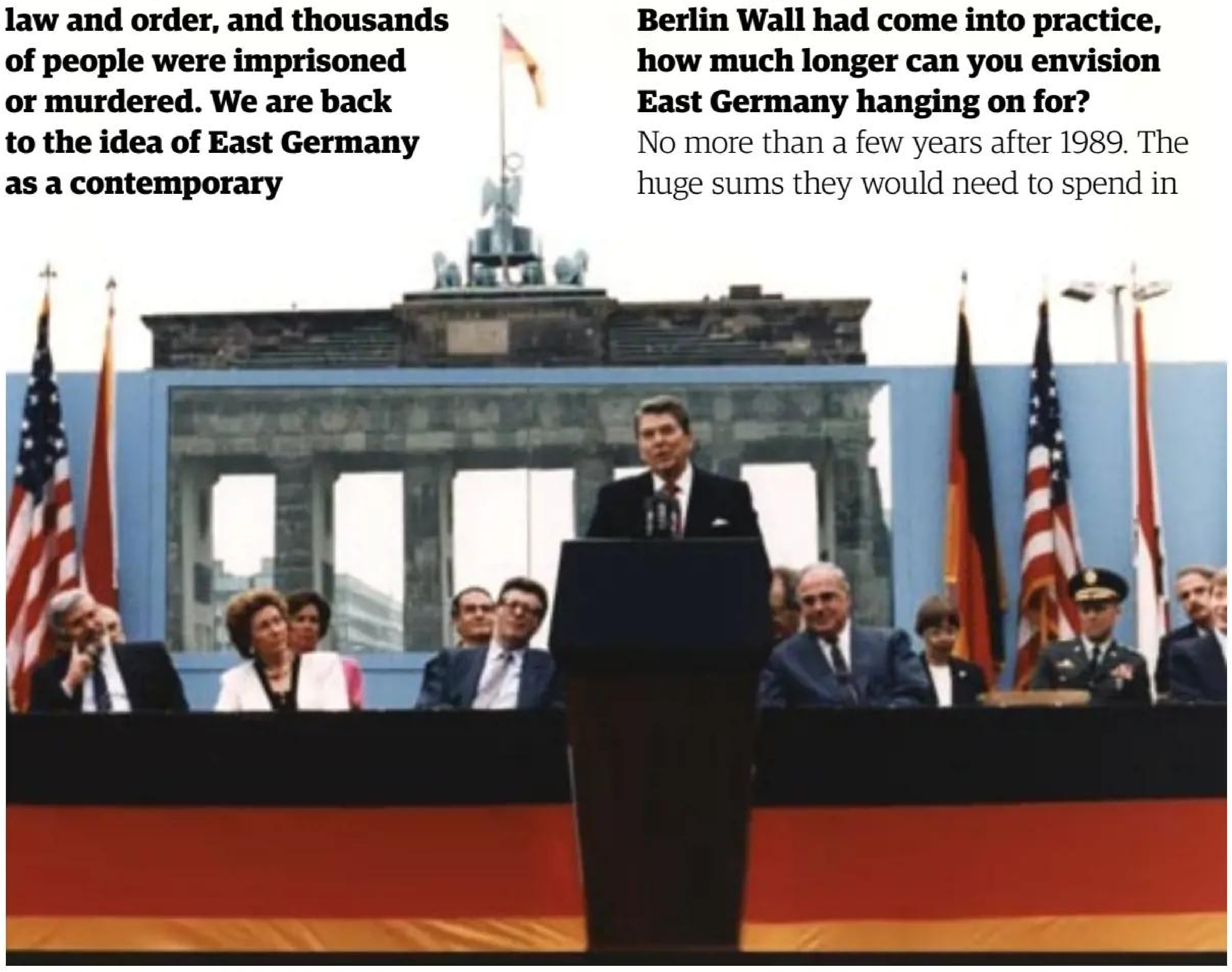
Fred Taylor was born in Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire, England. In 1967, he was awarded a history scholarship to Oxford University. After graduating, he pursued postgraduate studies at the University of Sussex, researching a thesis on the German far-right before 1918. He has since worked as a publisher, a translator of fiction and non-fiction, a novelist and a scriptwriter. He edited and translated *The Goebbels Diaries 1939-1941* and his books include *The Berlin Wall: 13 August 1961 – 9 November 1989* and *Exorcising Hitler*, about the destruction and resurgence of post-war Germany.

How would things be different if the Berlin Wall had never collapsed?
Basically, you would have had something not dissimilar to North Korea. The only way it would have worked is through massive repression. I think for the wall not to have fallen, it would have, first of all, meant that we would have experienced a different Eastern Bloc than the one we had in the 1980s. They would have had to stop the reforms, Gorbachev particularly, and if that had taken place, it would mean that the Cold War would have continued.

Can you envision a scenario where the Berlin Wall is still standing and East Germany, much like North Korea, still exists as a separate country?
It is very difficult to imagine this, but theoretically, I suppose they could have cracked down on dissent. There are a few reasons behind the fall of the Berlin Wall. The first and most simple is that the East German economy simply did not work. They had very few natural resources and terrible problems with inefficiency. Then, moving into the 1970s and 1980s, the Russians had stopped selling the East Germans cheap oil. This caused more economic problems. There are pictures of East German shops from the 1960s and 1970s, and then the 1980s – they tried to make it look as if everything was wonderful, but there was not much to buy except a few turnips. Another thing that needs to be established is that by the 1970s, they were also being loaned a lot of money from the West Germans, which they became very dependent on. Then, of course, there is the Helsinki Accords, which the East cynically signed up to – but they could not really offer the freedoms that they had just promised. Nevertheless, they wanted the kudos of seeming forward-thinking and freedom-loving, albeit without paying any of the costs for that. Inevitably, though, over time, there were some brave people in East Germany who demanded the freedoms of the Helsinki Accords, and unless the authorities started to crack down on them, returning them to a Stalinist regime, it is difficult to see how the communists could have stayed in power.

So let us imagine they did go down the route of announcing a state of emergency, offering the Stasi complete control over law and order, and thousands of people were imprisoned or murdered. We are back to the idea of East Germany as a contemporary North Korea. How would the wall have evolved?
Well, it is interesting because the East Germans were actually quite good at basic electronics. They were skilled at putting together cheaper versions of western electronics – and they had a plan to build a high-tech Berlin Wall. Moving into the 1990s and the millennium, it would have all kinds of alarms so that you wouldn't need armed guards. You would basically have an electronic surveillance system. However, while that was the goal, I don't think they had the financial or logistical ability to achieve that.

If this high-tech version of the Berlin Wall had come into practice, how much longer can you envision East Germany hanging on for?
No more than a few years after 1989. The huge sums they would need to spend in



RIGHT
At the Brandenburg Gate on 12 June 1987, President Ronald Reagan made his famous speech asking Mikhail Gorbachev to "tear down this wall"

FREEDOM

order to keep their new high-tech wall going would, I think, lead to the end in about 1995.

How would West Germany have benefited, if at all, from the continuation of East Germany?
In some ways, it might have benefited West Germany to keep the East in business because it would result in more cheap labour. East Germany, from the 1960s onwards, was a place where Western manufacturers had their work done cheaply. In West Germany, back when I lived there, you could get 24-hour film development done - straight from your camera - back in the days when you delivered it to a chemist. But they would actually ship it over the border to East Germany and ship it back again. That was true of textiles and other businesses.

So, if I can imagine an East Germany with this high-tech Berlin Wall still intact, I think it would be one that had basically become an economic colony of West Germany. It would have re-established a Stalinist regime to keep everybody quiet. The selling of political prisoners to the West was also an enormously profitable trade for the East, so that would probably have continued. In fact, there were rumours that they were arresting people just so they could make some income from selling them back.

Let's say the Berlin Wall falls, as it did in 1989, but the majority of East Germans want to remain part of a separate state. Is this imaginable?
A few idealists at the time did actually want to try a third way - a liberal socialist state of sorts. But, honestly, the only reason that East Germany could have, and perhaps should have, survived for a few more years was for the economy. When unification did happen, it was a bit of an economic car crash. All of these totally uncompetitive East German businesses were faced with the full force of competition from the West, as well as these carpet-bagging yuppies that went straight into East Berlin, in particular, and looked for profit. So I think a few years of adjustment, with some economic advantages and privileges and a loose political confederation - before total reunification - would have been a softer landing for most people. It was pretty bad for a lot of East Germans when the wall came down. East Germany was horribly uncompetitive. But the West Germans were already bailing them out before the border fell, and I suppose when you are paying somebody else's bills, you demand power

BELOW
Winston Churchill, Franklin D Roosevelt and Joseph Stalin at the Yalta Conference in February 1945

> "There was an Eastern Bloc joke - we pretend to work, they pretend to pay us"

HOW WOULD IT BE DIFFERENT?

REAL TIMELINE

1945

Yalta Conference
Shortly before the Red Army reaches Berlin, Winston Churchill, Franklin D Roosevelt and Joseph Stalin agree that after World War II, Germany will split into four separate 'occupation zones' under America, Britain, France and Russia.
4-11 February 1945

West German Republic
In February 1948, the United States, Britain and France meet in London, where they agree to unite each of the Western occupation zones into a greater German Republic. The Soviets, meanwhile, oversee a separate East German state.
February 1948

East German Constitution
The German Democratic Republic (better known as East Germany) is officially formed, complete with its own constitution. East Germany offers the right to emigrate and to trade union protection, however, inevitably, as with all Soviet-aligned nations, a heavy-handed one-party rule would soon surface. Amendments that will further limit personal freedoms of East Germans would emerge in a 1968 draft.
7 October 1949

The Warsaw Pact
The Cold War gets even chillier when eight Eastern Bloc countries, including East Germany, sign up to The Warsaw Pact - a pledge to defend any nation sympathetic to the Soviet cause from attack. **14 May 1955**

Erection of the Berlin Wall
Perhaps the most famous event of the Cold War, The German Democratic Republic erects a barrier between East and West Berlin. The wall is designed to stop the mass emigration from East to West. **13 August 1961**

ALTERNATE TIMELINE

East German Constitution
Rather than maintaining influence from the Weimer era of the country's politics, the first constitution of the German Democratic Republic explicitly maintains a totalitarian, Stalinist state in which western influences are banned outright.
7 October 1949

over them. So reunification, in light of that, had to come from the most practical economic solution. But had there been some way to have a two-tier system so that the East could adjust to the new economics, I think it would certainly have helped.

In East Germany, there was no unemployment, free health and childcare, and a supportive welfare state but no freedom of speech and a wealth of political prisoners. Now, in a reunified Germany, there is plenty of homelessness and poverty, but of course, you can take to the streets in protest. So what was really the best outcome for so-called 'freedom', in retrospect?

That's the very question we are all asking ourselves, isn't it? What is freedom? What is democracy? And does one type of freedom potentially undermine and even destroy the freedom of a different kind of person? Unemployment was a criminal offence in East Germany, as it was in Russia at the time, but the problem is they built up this fake economy to keep people working. That economy was running up huge deficits, and that is what caused the financial implosion of the Eastern Bloc in the 1980s. There was an Eastern Bloc joke – we pretend to work, they pretend to pay us. So, yes, everybody was working, but productivity was low. So, this façade of full employment was stirring up trouble for itself. However, we have certainly gone too far the other way now. Being a sentimental old social democrat, I think the 1960s and 1970s were when we found a decent balance that we have since lost. If you don't, to some extent, curb the freedoms of the very wealthy few to help those who have less power and money, you have a society where different kinds of pressures build up.

BETONDEMONTAGETECHNI
LOVE & PEACE IN WEST & EAST
Test, West

ABOVE
Germans stand on top of the Berlin Wall in the days before it fell

We have touched a little on the North Korea analogy. Finally, then, can we look at the East-West divide in Germany and really make that comparison?

In reality, I don't think so because the balance between North and South Korea is different to the relationship that existed between East and West Germany while the wall was up. There was always, aside from during the first few years of the wall being built, a cordial political relationship as well as travel going on between the two German states. Pensioners, for instance, could leave the East for the West if they wanted, and if they did not want to come back, it was not a big deal. They were just a burden on the state anyway. There was a lot of family visiting going on between the two states, too, and a functioning economic relationship.

The two Korean countries have none of that. If North Korea suddenly collapsed, then 25 million people, some of them starving, would flee to Seoul or to China and look for a job and a handout, which would cause economic devastation for those countries. That is why North Korea manages to hang on – China simply does not want that problem to develop. West Germany was different – reunification was the goal there, and it was inevitable.

Killing of Peter Fechter
Perhaps the most notorious execution of anyone trying to flee from East to West shows the brutality of the German Democratic Republic. Fechter, aged just 18, is shot in the pelvis and left to bleed to death. **17 August 1962**

The Helsinki Accords
35 countries meet in Finland. An agreement between communist and democratic nations is signed that guarantees numerous human rights and freedoms, but such declarations are later seen as a sham. **July-August 1975**

Reagan's Speech at the Brandenburg Gate
President Reagan gives one of his most iconic speeches in West Berlin, urging Mikhail Gorbachev, leader of the Soviet Union, to "tear down this wall". **12 June 1987**

The Wall Falls
The 'Peaceful Revolution' begins in East Germany during the summer of 1989. The climax comes on a winter's day in 1989 as East Germany, struggling to maintain order, declares the borders to be open for all. **9 November 1989**

The End of East Germany
With no borders to separate the East from the West, the German Democratic Republic is dissolved and a country that has been split apart for 45 years is finally reunified. **3 October 1990**

Suppression of the Peaceful Revolution
25,000 East Germans are sent to prison, and thousands more shot dead, in a Tiananmen Square-style suppression of political protest in the middle of East Berlin. **30 June 1989**

A new high-tech Berlin Wall
"The wall is here to stay," states Egon Krenz, the latest unapologetic leader of East Germany. He reveals plans for a high-tech Berlin Wall that will have state-of-the-art security. **1 January 1990**

Military First programme
Influenced by North Korea, parliament announces a Military First programme to sustain the ailing state. State employment will be increased by mandatory military service for all under-35s. **October 1996**

The last man standing
East Germany remains the lone wolf of Europe and a testament to the lasting effects of the Cold War. The annual visit from Kim Jong-un garners world attention, but little else. **Present day**

The Warsaw Pact
East Germany pressures the Soviets, who would give the Mongolian People's Republic 'observer status', to widen the signatories to include nations in Africa, Latin America and Asia. **14 May 1955**

Erection of the Berlin Wall
East Berlin's notorious Stasi, the country's official state security, forewarn all members of East Germany that anyone found to even be plotting to escape will be imprisoned for a minimum of ten years. **13 August 1961**

Long live Leonid Brezhnev
The hard-line Soviet leader surprises many with his Castro like ability to stay healthy. He makes it to the end of the 1980s and celebrates his 83rd birthday. Gorbachev, who? **19 December 1989**

The USSR crumbles
A belated attempt to sustain the Eastern Bloc comes to nothing and the Soviet Empire is no more. But East Germany refuses to budge and proclaims a new trade partnership with China. **9 November 1994**

Wall for the millennium
The Berlin Wall remains active on 1 January 2000 despite rumours it may be dissolved to celebrate the millennium. Armed guards return as, among power outages, the technology becomes too expensive to sustain. **1 January 2000**

© Ian Hinley

What if...

TIM BERNERS-LEE'S WEB PROPOSAL WAS REJECTED?

Corporate giants command the World Wide Web to control what see and what we say

INTERVIEW WITH

© J Hall

Professor Jon G Hall

Jon is a UK-based academic and researcher at The Open University, widely published in problem science, a discipline he's currently working hard to establish. His work spans higher education, digital transformation, and organisational problem solving, including modern responses to regulation with the Modern Work Foundation. He is dedicated to fostering innovation, leadership, and economic growth through research and community engagement.

Unless we had already blown the windows out of our digital hothouse, it's difficult to imagine a modern world without the World Wide Web (WWW) – spearheaded by scientist Tim Berners-Lee at CERN in the late 1980s. However, had it been driven not by science but by the forces of ignorance, hubris and greed, it would certainly have been radically different. Worryingly, given that those forces are increasingly influential today, one might question whether the scenario explored here is that of an alternative world or an inevitable part of our future.

Tim Berners-Lee's World Wide Web idea was impressive and ambitious. What might have happened if his superiors at CERN rejected his proposal to work on it, and what makes Berners-Lee's Web so remarkable?

Tim Berners-Lee's World Wide Web offered a global system for information sharing – created of the people, by the people and for the people. It was science, not business, that made it happen.

In corporate hands, we would have localised, proprietary networks, a bit like CompuServe or AOL, which were not at all compatible or interoperable, and were lacking the Web's openness, universality and freeness. The resulting race for global information-sharing domination would have resulted in dramatic corporate battles but also would have stunted the revolution on how we connect, collaborate and create.

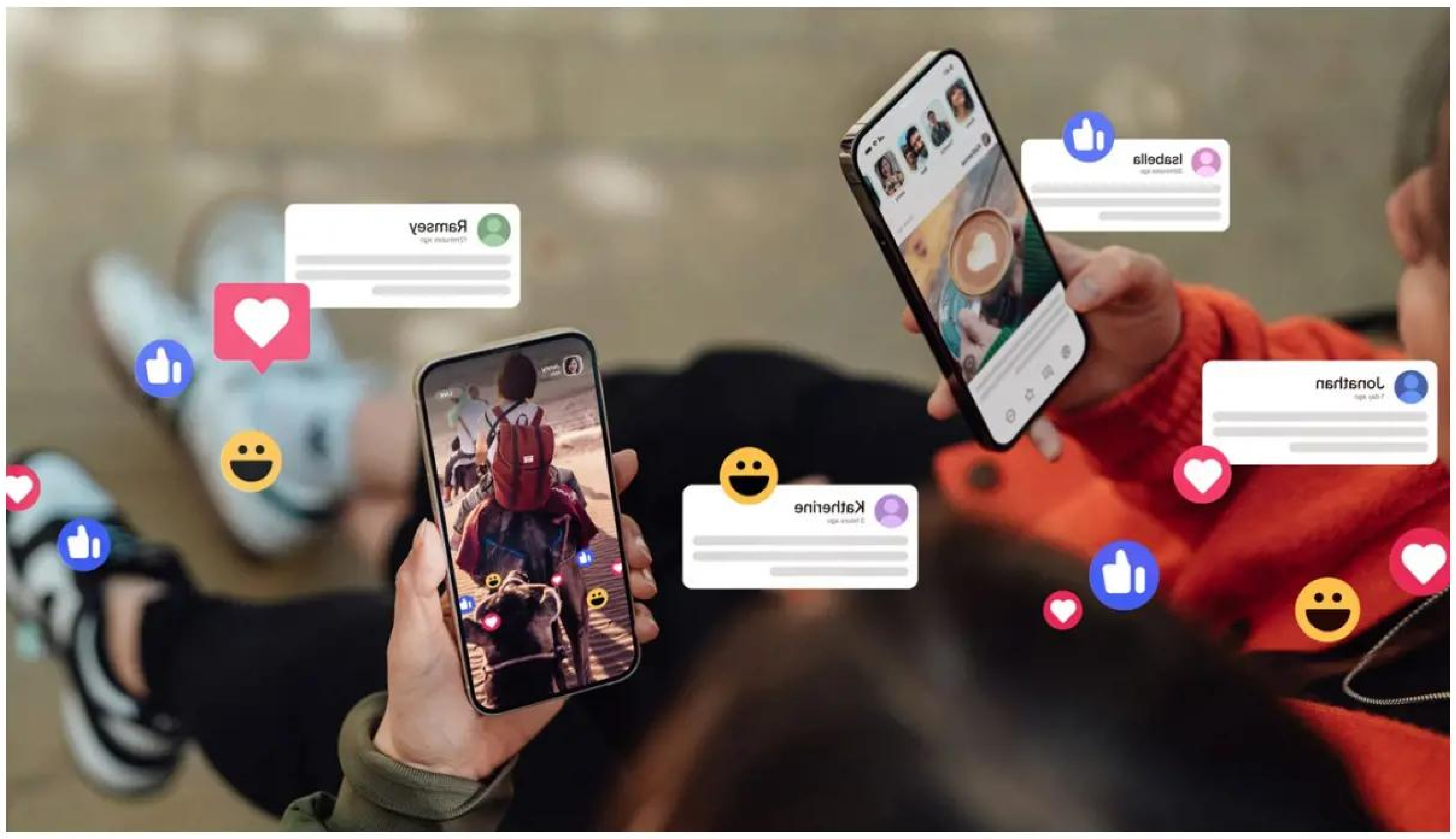
An alternative would have been a military web, unlikely ever to be public. The competition amongst world powers to have the upper hand would have been equally intense to any corporate battle. The World Wide Web would give ever-increasing global military interests the ability to disperse and share information across the globe with tremendous efficiency, with big risks and big incentives for anyone who could leak information on it.

The Web's genius lies in the hyperlink – a digital shortcut that can transport you anywhere in the information universe. Hyperlinks are at the core of Berners-Lee's vision of the World Wide Web as a free and open system and are what made it revolutionary. Imagine if these links were an instrument of commerce, with a price per click attached or hidden behind corporate paywalls, severely curtailing our freedom of movement between information centres.

What were the issues and obstacles that had to be overcome when creating the World Wide Web?

Before the Web, networks were largely isolated, and data exchange was cumbersome and highly technical. 1993 saw CERN make the WWW technology royalty-free, open and accessible to all, allowing innovation and access to flourish. Web standards quickly emerged, and browsers made the underlying technologies accessible even to non-technical users. One issue that had never been faced before was that of a single standard that could serve the needs of everyone. No other communication system had ever tried to bring everyone together. Hypertext – not Berners-Lee's term, by the way – was the answer and, from *this* user's first exposure to them, I was hooked on their apparent simplicity.

As it grew, the World Wide Web also accelerated efforts to address privacy,



FAR RIGHT
Tim Berners-Lee's first draft proposal nearly didn't make it

RIGHT
The good and bad facets of social media would not exist

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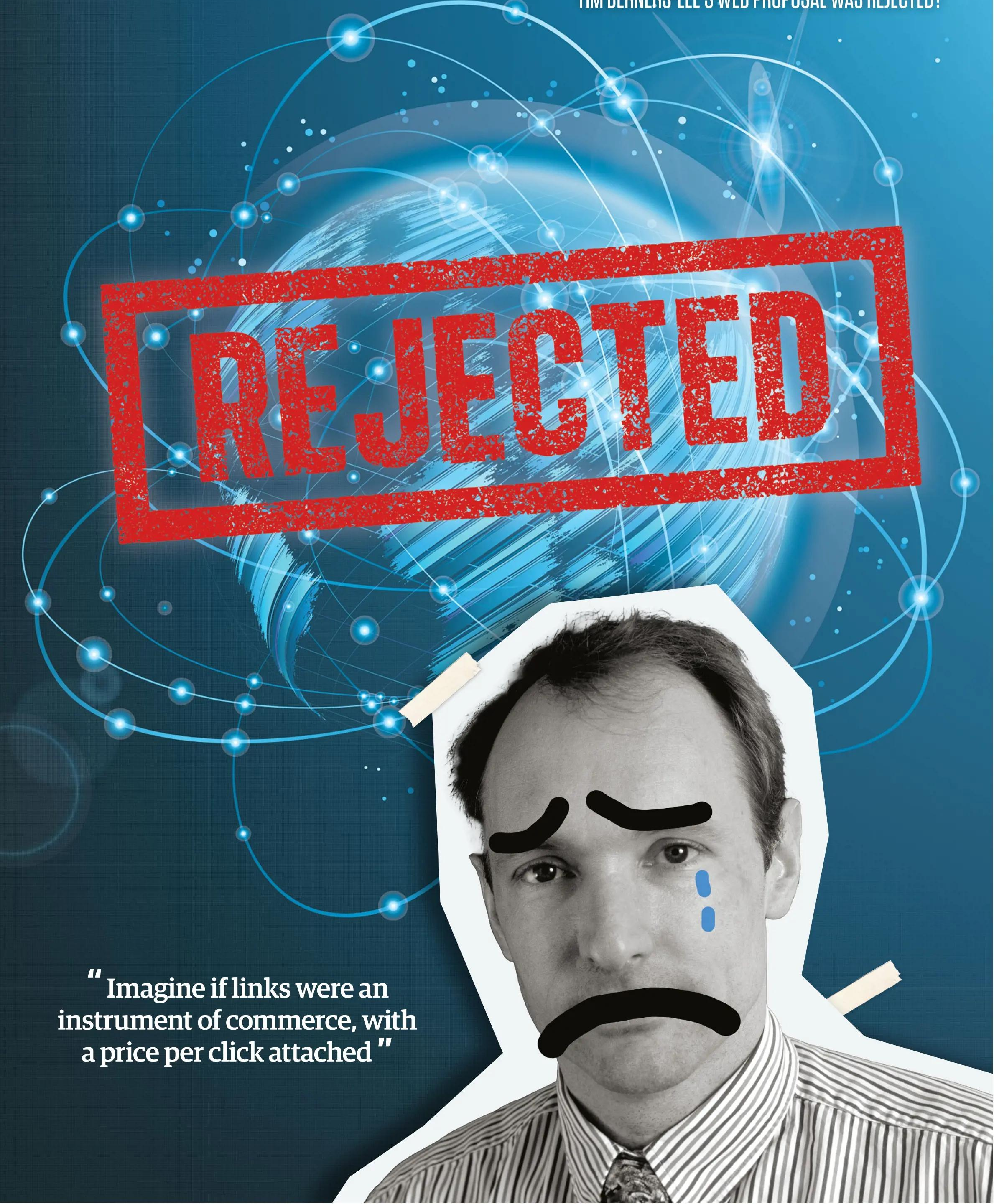
Interview by David J Williamson. **Main image source:** © Alamy, © Getty Images

What if…

TIM BERNERS-LEE'S WEB PROPOSAL WAS REJECTED?



> "Imagine if links were an instrument of commerce, with a price per click attached"

THE PAST

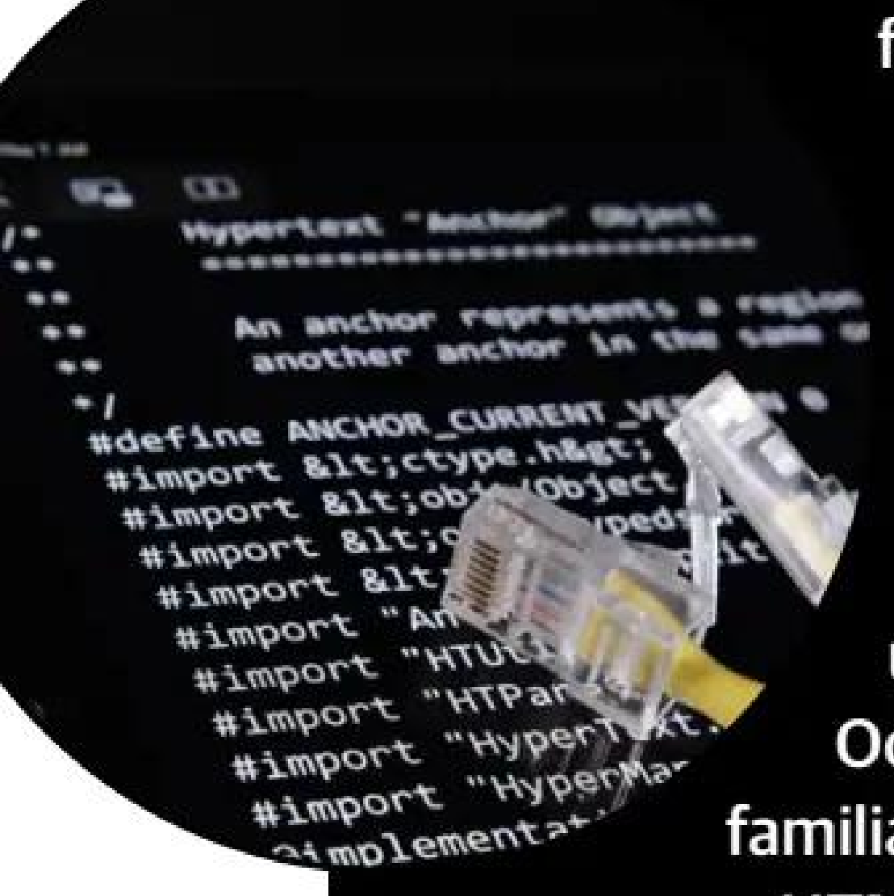
PRE 1989

IDENTIFYING THE PROBLEM

Whilst working at the CERN particle physics lab in Switzerland as a software engineer, Tim Berners-Lee noticed how the vast array of scientists from all over the globe were having difficulty sharing information. "In those days, there was different information on different computers, but you had to log on to different computers to get at it. Also, sometimes you had to learn a different program on each computer. Often, it was just easier to go and ask people when they were having coffee…". Millions of computers were already connected by the internet, but for him, it was about finding a way they could share information openly.

1989

A FALSE START



Berners-Lee created the first draft of his vision for the Web in a document called 'Information Management: A Proposal'. Quite a bland, yet matter-of-fact, title for something that was to revolutionise the world of communication. In fact, this first draft was not immediately accepted, his boss scribbling "vague but exciting" on the cover. Although not an official CERN project, in 1990 Tim was given time to work on it, using his NeXT computer. By October 1990, some now very familiar titles had emerged, such as HTML, URI/URL and HTTP.

1991 ONWARDS

THE DREAM GROWS

Berners-Lee writes the first web page editor/browser – WorldWideWeb.app – and by the end of 1990, the first web page was served on the open internet, with people outside of CERN invited to join the new web community in 1991. It was Berners-Lee's wish and dream that everyone should have access to the web without paying a fee or asking permission. "You can't propose that something be a universal space and at the same time keep control of it." The code was made available on a royalty-free basis forever. The start of the creativity, collaboration and innovation we see today.

ABOVE
The Web underpins the new wave of working from home

regulation and content control. These concerns evolved into political issues, leading to national and international debates on the balance between freedom and regulation in cyberspace. With the WWW's freedom being refracted through many cultural prisms, those debates have taken on many different hues, depending on the colour of their host's politics.

Democratisation continues apace, however, with the 'Dark Web' continuing to grow. The Dark Web lives on the frontiers of information sharing outside of national boundaries. Through it, one can reach dark places, or so I've been told: it's the 'Wild West of the Web'. It has enabled like-minded individuals, often with less than moral or legal intent, to operate as a much larger global group, sharing information and supporting their views. Without the Web, their actions would have been much more localised and perhaps easier to track and uncover.

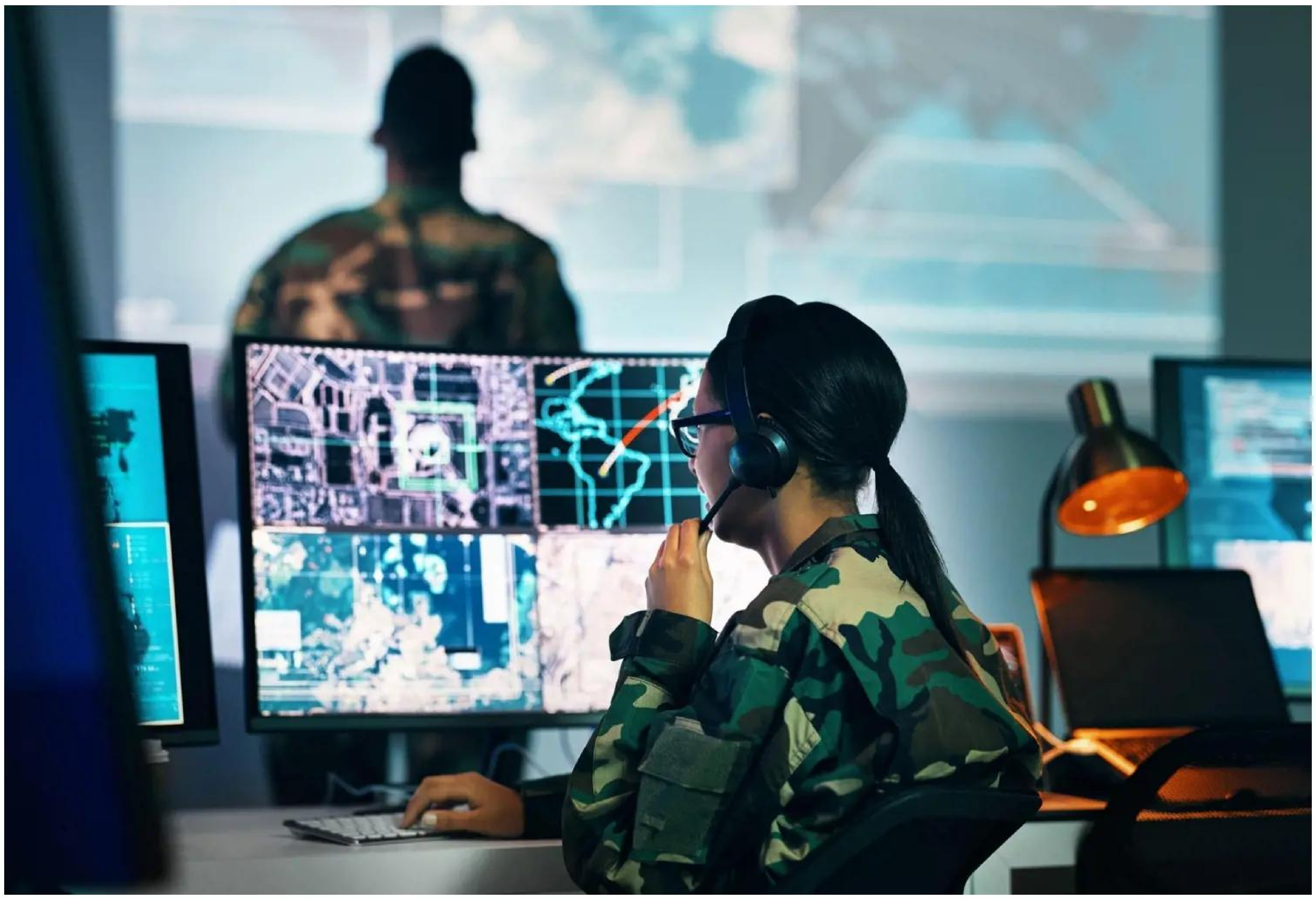
Were there any alternative development paths that would have resulted in the creation of the Web?
Had Tim Berners-Lee been turned down by CERN, he could have approached tech companies like Apple, Microsoft or IBM, but then, the commercial concerns would have hit it immediately. Alternatively, academic institutions such as MIT or Stanford likely would have supported the project, and perhaps given us the same endpoint. Had Berners-Lee worked for the military, the World Wide Web would likely have emerged eventually, albeit with more restricted functionality – similar to how GPS was initially released with limited accuracy for public use.

The system wouldn't be the World Wide Web; it would have been called something entirely different: how about the Apple 'iNet', Microsoft's 'Surf', or AOL's 'The World Online'?

What would have global politics looked like without the World Wide Web? Would there have been any significant economic implications?
Politically, the Web has enabled greater access to information and fostered

> "Berners-Lee could have approached tech companies like Apple, Microsoft or IBM"

BELOW
With no Web, the world would not experience free information sharing. Libraries would remain hubs for resources



grassroots movements worldwide. Without it, authoritarian regimes might have had more control over the flow of information, and global political activism would have been much more difficult to organise.

Economically, the Web has revolutionised industries like e-commerce, digital marketing and remote work. Its absence would have slowed globalisation and limited the growth of a digital economy. Small businesses would struggle to reach global markets, and the tech industry as we know it today might never have fully developed.

Without the Web – without the socialisation of media – wedge issues, conspiracy theories, and the 24-hour news cycle machine that feeds on outrage may never have started. The politics of overwhelming despair, of senseless protest, of exhibitionism are unlikely to have arisen as quickly as they have; as a result, society may have been more cohesive, free and fair – if more insular.

What benefits have the World Wide Web given the world? Would you say the world is better with it?

For the individual, the Web has contributed to safety through faster communication in emergencies, enabling online education and facilitating as-it-happens global collaboration. Tools for online health information, early warning systems and remote monitoring have also made the world safer. Most of us have benefited from GPS rerouting us around accidents, all communicated over the Web.

However, globally, the weaponisation of digital platforms for drama and outrage mouse clicks has made it hard to argue that whole communities are safer, or that the world is more secure. Oppressive regimes are also able to filter the output (at least, to an extent) and input of information seen by their citizens, controlling individual thought and expression as well as the narrative for their own political persona and ambitions.

Environmentally, the World Wide Web has reduced the need for paper – a renewable resource – but increased energy consumption through data centres and compressed device replacement cycles. The ever-growing demand for energy sustains the use of fossil fuels and all that they entail.

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Welcome

The Department for Education is responsible for education and children's services. Find out about the **academies programme** which provides schools with greater freedoms to innovate and raise standards.

Review of early years qualifications

Academies work

As of 1 April 2012 there are 1776 academies open in England

Watch a film about the benefits and freedoms of gaining academy status

Cadet expansion plans

TOP
In military hands, the Web would have been a closely guarded asset

ABOVE
Connection to information on vital services would be lost without the Web

THE POSSIBILITY

1991 ONWARDS

LEGACY ECONOMIC POWERHOUSES

Without the Web, the digital economy as we know it would not exist, meaning giants like Amazon, Google and Facebook would never have risen. Instead, global economic dominance would have remained with traditional industries such as oil, manufacturing and heavy industry. Without digital innovation, nations like the US and China may have experienced a decline in relevance. Meanwhile, countries rich in natural resources or with extensive industrial infrastructures – such as Russia, Brazil or parts of Africa – could wield more power.

1991 ONWARDS

FRACTURED REVOLUTIONS

Without the digital platform that allows people to unite virtually, political movements like the Arab Spring or Occupy Wall Street might never have occurred. Instead, revolutions would have relied on traditional, slower methods – underground organising, pamphleteering and face-to-face meetings – making them more fragmented and likely bloodier. Power structures would be more resistant to change, and with fewer avenues for exposing injustices, political and societal progress would be significantly delayed. The established powers would likely remain intact.

1991 ONWARDS

CULTURAL AND SCIENTIFIC ISOLATIONISM

While global intellectual exchange wouldn't cease, it would slow dramatically. Scientific collaborations such as the Human Genome Project or the rapid development of vaccines would be delayed by decades, reducing our ability to protect against Covid-19, for instance. Similarly, global cultural exchanges – ranging from the spread of K-pop to Bollywood's rise on western platforms – would not have occurred, resulting in a world where local traditions and trends dominate, with fewer cross-cultural fusions. Oh, and there would be fewer cat videos.

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What if...

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20th Century History

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THE NAZIS HAD NEVER GAINED POWER?

During the interwar years, Germany faced numerous crises but it was defined by progressive leadership and Hitler's rise was not guaranteed

"Jewish life also flourished – another sign of openness"

Nazi Party Disbands

Explore how Germany would weather economic crisis without a war-hungry Hitler at its helm

What if...

JOHN LENNON HAD SURVIVED?

The music lives on to inspire new generations and the battle for peace remains as tireless as ever

Lennon Lives

With John Lennon alive and well, would The Beatles reunite, and would he push harder for world peace?

What if...

NATO HAD NOT BEEN FORMED?

The USA pulls its troops, missiles and money back across the Atlantic

No NATO

Without the US to back it up, Europe would face a difficult task in standing up to the Soviet Union

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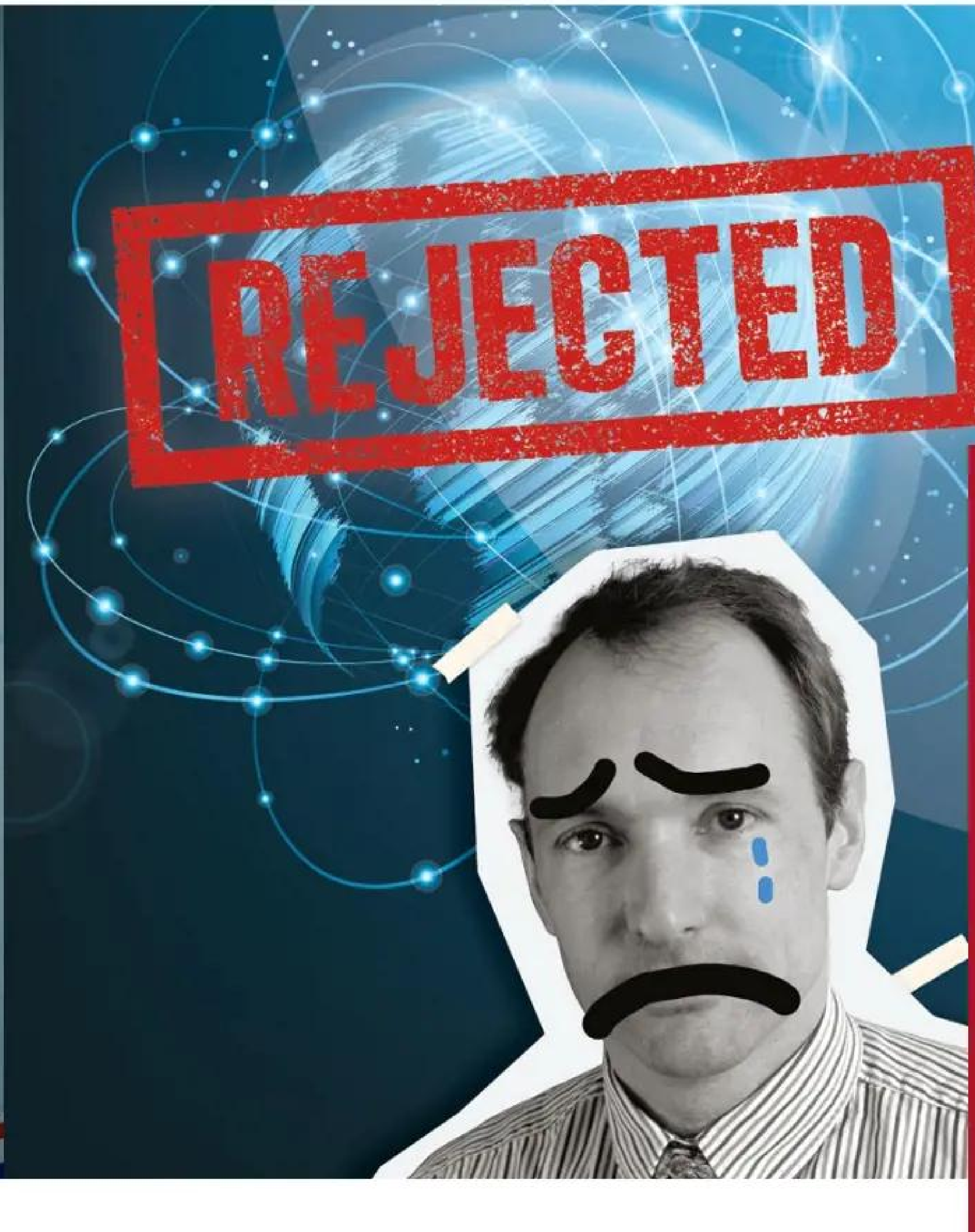

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